WHEN·I·WAS·A·GIRL IN·SWEDEN

ANNA-MIA HERTZMAN

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Sincerely Yours,

Anna-Alice Hertzman.

WHEN I WAS A GIRL IN SWEDEN

By
ANNA-MIA HERTZMAN
(*Leonne de Cambrey*)

ILLUSTRATED FROM PHOTOGRAPHS

BOSTON
LOTHROP, LEE & SHEPARD CO.

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When I Was a Girl In Sweden

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To ***LEO****, my son*
and
To the memory of ***ARVID****,*
my husband

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WHEN I WAS A GIRL IN SWEDEN

CHAPTER I

MY BIRTHPLACE AND EARLY MEMORIES

I WAS born in the province of Småland, some miles south of the city of Oscarshamn. The house was a very quaint one—old, grey, and built of stone. The windows had numberless tiny leaded panes of greenish glass. In the living-room there was an enormous semicircular fireplace. I do not remember the years my parents lived in this house. It was shown to me in later years by my mother, who wanted me to see the place where my only brother Emil and I had been born. (The little brother had died before I was born, and both Mother and Father deeply

mourned the loss of their first-born child and only son.)

The first home I can distinctly recall was located out in the country, near the village Stora Fighult. Our house which faced east was a new one and timbered, holding a commanding position on the highest knoll of land in the vicinity. The grounds were terraced and enclosed by a low stone wall topped with a red-and-white picket fence. Terrace slopes, banked by retaining shrubs, contrasted with the level spaces where informal beds and borders of annual and perennial flowers in their seasons bloomed in great masses. Mother was a great lover of growing things.

Early in the spring we welcomed the shyly bowing snowdrops, the charming blue " grape-hyacinths," the daffodils, and the tulips; later came " bleeding-hearts " and aquilegias.

Back of our house grew two stately spruce-trees, looking like a pair of giant

Christmas trees. To my childish mind, they seemed to stand guard over our house. Nature had an expanse that ever since has caused me to feel cramped in the cities where I have been forced to live.

The spruce forest began right back of our house, and in the dim, blue-green shadows one could imagine elves and woodland sprites flitting about. Near my home, hidden away in the dense forest, were two small lakes; dreamy, darkly mysterious they lay, framed by lofty pines and spruce-trees. It was said that in those two lakes dwelled *Näcken,* the Swedish water-god. We children were forbidden to go near the shores of those two lakes, for it may be that the water-sprites might pull us down to *Näcken;* we would be forced to remain his companions forever, and listen to his mournful harping and singing. Also, if we ventured too far into the forest, we might be carried off by the wood-nymph or some of her attendants; or even be taken by the *trolls* into their

gloomy underground homes below the mountains.

My secret naughty wish was to be taken captive by some of those un-human beings. Often would I deliberately separate myself from my village playmates, and with thumping heart and hurrying feet dash in among the towering trees in the hope of catching, at least, a glimpse of some uncanny creature. But, alas, it was not my good fortune to meet any such adventure. Fear of the unseen world had not been planted in my soul; rather, my gentle mother always warned us not to do anything to offend the elves and sprites which might flit about unseen.

Our living-room was a pleasant one, especially on cold, stormy winter evenings. A great sofa stood between two windows at the upper end of the room, with a round table in front. A reading lamp, books, illustrated papers, and a work-basket were on the table. Hand-made cupboards,

chests, armchairs, and rockers, and a tall, old, blue-painted Mora-clock were among other furnishings. A cleverly constructed gate-leg table stood near the door leading to the kitchen, and could be extended until it would seat thirty people. But for family use, only the drop leaves were raised and the table laid for meals.

Around this table gathered my parents and Father's tannery assistants, our maid, and we children. One had to sit silent and patient, waiting until the elders were served, and not a morsel of food must be left on a child's plate when the meal was finished. Grace was said before we sat down; afterwards we again thanked God for the food, and then our parents, over a deep curtsy. At the table children never spoke unless spoken to. This practice taught us to listen attentively to our elders, and we heard much about the affairs of the outer world, for Father kept himself well informed about politics and the important events in Europe.

Our happiest hours indoors were spent around the huge open fireplace during the long winter evenings. Great birchwood logs burned lustily and brightly. To me, our fireplace seemed like an altar. Here we sat warm and snug while a blizzard might pile the snow up against our windows in great hard drifts. Stories were told, or somebody would read aloud while the maid's spinning-wheel kept up a soft purr. No idle hands were permitted. In Sweden, it is considered a disgrace not to know how to sew, knit, spin, embroider, or make laces.

My father was a large, splendidly built man. He stood six feet six in his stocking feet, and carried himself with pride. To my childish mind he was quite the most awe-inspiring man in the world. And in his own household he ruled like the Czar of Russia. His word was law. None of us ever thought of disobeying him. But he, too, could unbend and be-

come playful; this softer mood usually came upon him at Christmas—but more of that later.

Gentleness was the outstanding trait of Mother's character. She was a plump, pretty, motherly little woman, with lovely, wide-set, blue-grey eyes, and a mass of rust-brown hair that she always wore in braids wound round her head. People loved her for her kindliness and consideration of others, this mother of five children. (I was the oldest living child, and had three younger sisters.)

Both my parents were book-lovers. Each time Father returned from a business trip to Stockholm, he brought back with him a box of the latest books. These books we eagerly read, and also loaned to our friends. As I look back on my childhood, I can now see that it was not for their few material possessions that my parents were looked up to in the community, but for what they were within—their ideals and integrity. In a manner,

our house was a sort of intellectual center in the neighborhood.

The earliest distinct thrill touching my own inner life and yearnings that I remember was when Father returned from a trip to the capital. I was eight years old at the time. He brought me a little box of water-color paints, also a few brushes and a book of pictures to copy. I had always loved bright colors, and my joy had often been keen to deck out my sisters' dolls in the gaudiest of garments. That box of colors—what unlimited possibilities it contained! Secretly I cherished two dreams for my future: I wanted to become an artist and a writer. Alas, my ambition to become an artist had to be laid aside when a series of painful circumstances, after I had arrived in America, forced me to choose another vocation. But that box of colors gave me such happiness that I scarcely slept the night after Father got home.

Fortunately the next day was Satur-

day, and I was exempt from my usual lessons. The ordinary school subjects were taught me at home, for my parents hoped to be able to send me to a good private school later. So on Saturday, after my various tasks around the house had been done, I would be free to paint.

I was up and dressed before daylight. My most tedious and tiring chore was to fill the huge wooden container and the iron cistern in the kitchen with fresh water from the pump out in the yard. One of Father's tannery helpers did the pumping into the great vat under the pump. Then came my part of the work. Also, following the water-carrying, the furniture in the living-room had to be carefully dusted after the room had been swept and aired.

Finally I was free to do what I pleased. I scorned the little book of pictures to be copied that Father had brought me. Instead, I had decided on doing a gaily colored illustration from the Bible History:

Joseph at the Court of Pharaoh. This was fancy enough to suit me. The walls were red, there were green-and-yellow pillars with papyrus and lotus decorations, while the Egyptians themselves were arrayed in the gaudiest of raiment.

Of course I knew nothing about painting, so my work was a mass of meaningless blobs and streaks of color. I was utterly discouraged, but I had faith in prayer, so that night I astonished Mother in praying thus: "Dearest God, please send one of the color-fairies to help me with my painting, and I promise you in return to be the best little girl in the world. Amen."

Wise, understanding Mother! She had lovingly listened to what I prayed for. So on Monday afternoon an hour was set aside for my first painting lesson. She had some skill in painting birds and gay flower mottoes. Step by step she taught me what she knew about color magic. Naturally, her knowledge of the art was

somewhat limited, but how carefully she handled my little precious cakes of colors!

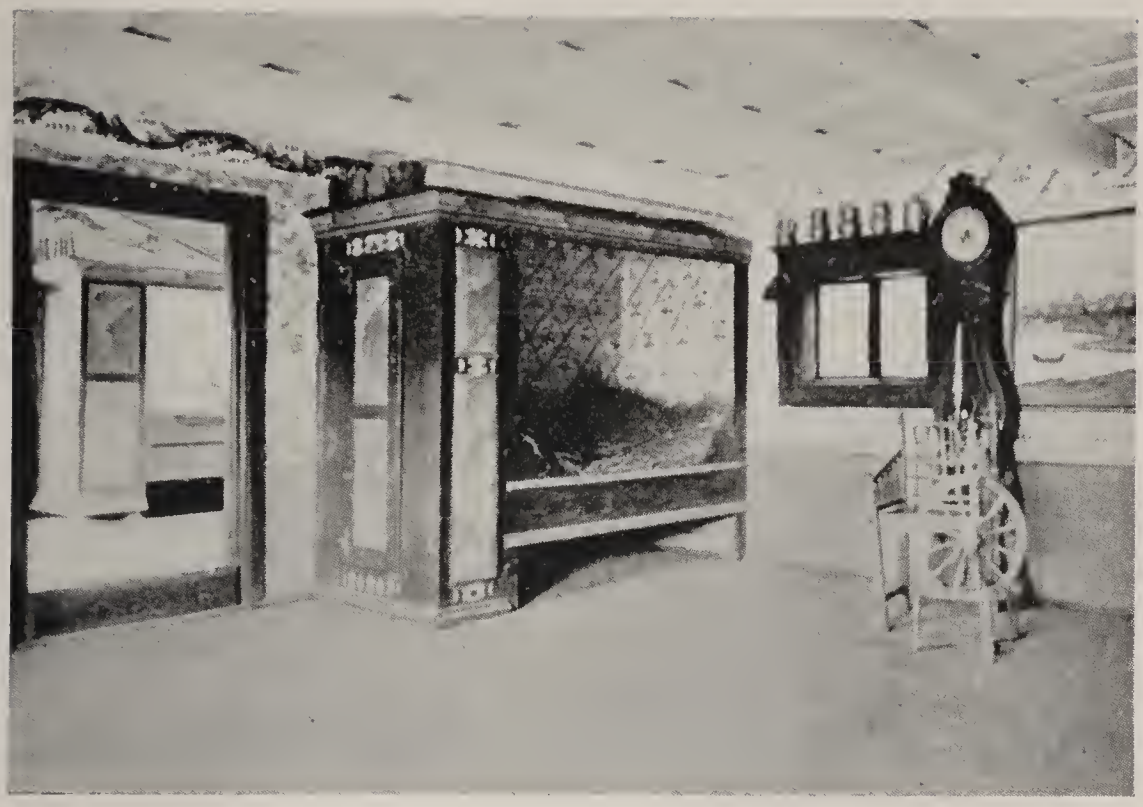
Best of all, she aroused in my soul an early love for Nature in all her changing moods. Mother was passionately fond of blue. She showed me the countless tints of this color in flowers, in the sky, and in our own beloved Baltic Sea. One sea view I shall always treasure: the island of the Jungfrun, mistily outlined, like a huge, inverted, blue-grey bowl afloat on the shimmering blue-green of the sea at the very edge of the horizon.

Father and Mother loved beautiful things, especially pictures. On the walls in our house were some inherited paintings; subjects from our mythology and history books, also a fine likeness of our beloved King Oscar II, and an etching of the Royal Castle in Stockholm.

But my enthusiasm for painting and colors was not allowed to interfere with my work and studies. I was allowed to

play with my colors only after every task was satisfactorily done.

I had learned to read at the age of five, Mother having been my teacher. My reading consisted of Bible stories, fairy tales, Pilgrim's Progress, Gulliver's Travels, Grimm, Dante's Divine Comedy with Gustave Doré illustrations—fearful, awe-inspiring pictures. But Homer's Iliad and Hans Christian Andersen's Fairy Tales were my earliest favorites.



INTERIOR OF PEASANT HOME.
Showing spinning-wheel, built-in bed, with wardrobe at foot, wall-decorations, and Mora-clock.

SKO KLOSTER CASTLE.
The Swedes built for the future. This is a fair example of the architecture of the Middle Ages. On Christmas Eve, a lighted taper burns in every window.

CHAPTER II

A DAY SPENT IN THE COUNTRY

One day in July Hulda, who was our maid at that time, had packed a basket of foodstuffs together with sister's and my pet dolls—also my cross-stitch work—for we were to spend the whole day in the country. It was only seven in the morning when Byström, the rural mail-carrier, came with his rig to pick us up.

We rode with him for an hour, away from the sea into the country. At last we were set down near the ruins of an old sawmill where a stone bridge spanned a river. The scenery around here was very pretty, hills steep with cool ravines between them. The river ran placidly through a wide meadow with little clumps of shady trees here and there, and hazel and wild-crab.

Hulda carried my sister " piggy-back "

while I lugged the basket. Soon enough we found a spot where we decided to spend the day. It was a shady little copse of oaks and maples about fifty meters away from the river bank.

Herr Byström would sound his post-horn in the evening on his return, and wait for us by the stone bridge. A glow of utter happiness—vividly remembered to this day—filled my being. To have a whole long day away from all restraint, from household tasks, lessons, and errands, was a rare treat for me.

Constance was put to sleep on the shawl, and Hulda and I strolled about. Our maid knew this locality well, for her widowed mother and four sons lived in the village on the hill.

Hulda's father had been a well-to-do farmer once upon a time, but heavy drinking had caused him to neglect his farm and run heavily into debt. One winter night while driving home from a drinking party on one of the islands in the

Baltic, he had happened to cross a thin spot in the frozen Kalmar Sound, and horses and sled, with the half-sober farmer, had gone to the bottom. His widow and her five children had to leave the farm to creditors. Hulda's parents and mine had always known each other, so when the girl was grown up, she came to us to help Mother with the household tasks and to look after us children.

To-day after a little while, the village children came down to the river to bathe and play. Hulda knew them all, and soon I had a number of new playmates. We picked luscious wild strawberries, so ruby-red and fragrant, and strung them, like beads, on long straws, then ate the berries off the straws. Nils-Johan, Hulda's youngest brother, made for me a cunning little basket of satiny white birch-bark, and this the village children soon had filled with the biggest and reddest of strawberries, which were carefully covered with maple leaves to keep the berries fresh un-

til it was time for us to go home. I thanked the children for their gift.

Next we played "Midsummer-bride." The tallest of village girls was to be crowned bride. We made garlands of flowers and oak leaves, also a daisy wreath for a crown, and with this we decked the chosen one. Then we had a procession with music—Nils-Johan had a mouth-organ, and another boy had a *ler-jök* or clay-cuckoo, on which quite a number of simple tunes could be played. Hulda, too, took part in this game; she led the march.

While we were thus making merry, sister had wakened. She stumbled to her feet and strolled off towards the river, unobserved by Hulda or me; we were perhaps too intent on the fun of marching and singing to think of little Constance, who may have become confused by the noise and commotion while still only half awake.

Suddenly Jan-Ola, one of the older village boys, gave a shout of alarm and

dashed off towards the river. In a few minutes he returned, dripping, with my tiny sister in his arms sputtering and screaming at the top of her voice. The tumble into the water had of course thoroughly frightened and wakened her. The lad explained that he had suddenly caught a glimpse of Constance's pink frock slipping off the river bank and disappearing.

Poor Hulda was trembling and pale. If my sister had drowned, she would have been blamed. Constance had to be undressed, for she was soaked to the skin. We wrapped her in a shawl, and her little garments were spread on the hazel bushes to dry.

Once more order and quiet were restored. Then came the clanging of the *vällings-klocka* calling the village children and the workers in the fields home for their noonday meal and a welcome hour of rest. Hulda, my sister, and I all ate heartily of the food we had brought with us. Meanwhile we were eagerly looking

forward to the return of the village children; they had promised to come and play with me during the afternoon. They spoke of a mysterious game called *Aka-på-ändan,* about which I was very curious. Our maid merely smiled, and would not give me any explanation about how this game was played.

In the middle of the meadow was a solitary huge rock fully the size of a church. There was a legend about this rock and other similar ones found here and there on the plains. It is said that in the days of giants, these great creatures often amused themselves playing " catch " with these rocks lying around loose on the mountain slopes. Once in a while a giant failed to catch the rock tossed towards him, and being a lazy race, they always let such " pebbles " remain where they had fallen.

But my father had a different explanation for the presence of those huge rocks and boulders: they had been carried there

by the glaciers during a period when Sweden was covered with ice. But I must confess that I preferred to think that the giants had tossed these rocks about in their play.

When the village children returned, they almost at once initiated me in the promised new game of *Aka-pa-ändan*. The great rock was to be used in this game. One side of this rock had a gentle slope which made it possible to scramble to its top, while there was on one side a sheer perpendicular drop that made me dizzy when I looked down towards the ground on reaching the top. I forgot to state that we had all taken off our shoes and stockings, for we could get up to the top so much more easily barefooted.

The game required that we girls gather up our skirts in back, and bunch them into a bloomer effect. Then we seated ourselves at the top of the huge rock and slid down at great speed to the ground. The girls tobogganed down first. After us

came the boys with a great shouting; they had both arms free to wave in the air as they went down, while we girls were hampered with managing our skirts. I found the keenest joy in playing this new game. But retribution waited for me: my dress was not made of stout material like that of my village playmates. My frock was just an ordinary gingham. To be sure, it was woven on Mother's hand-loom, but it was not much heavier than Scotch gingham, such as any American girl might wear to school. This game hopelessly ruined the back of my frock. One of the elder village girls, who saw this state of affairs first, kindly and quietly drew Hulda's attention to the large worn-through place which showed my petticoat. Such a catastrophe would, of course, merit a spanking, unless Hulda could smuggle my garment up to the attic, where all soiled clothing was kept, until the washing week came around. So now, all the rest of the afternoon was occupied in singing

ballads, telling stories, and reading from the book of fairy tales I had brought with me. Finally the post-horn sounded the signal for our departure. Nils-Johan carried sister Constance, who was dressed in her once-more-dry garments, and we left the meadow escorted by the village children. I wore the shawl draped corner-wise so as to cover my torn dress, and having bade the children good-bye, were soon jogging along behind "Brunte," Herr Byström's sturdy horse.

When we reached home, Father met us at the door, took the sleeping Constance out of Hulda's arms, and laid her on the living-room sofa. Then, taking me by the hand, he spoke in a curious, hushed voice: "Come up to Mama's room, Anna-Mia; we'll show you something."

A horrible fear gripped my heart, and my knees almost doubled up. I still wore the shawl, so Father couldn't possibly have seen the ragged hole in my dress. Would I be punished for something they

had discovered during the day? What had I done? It would not do to ask Father. He seldom condescended to explain in advance why correction was due.

At last we had reached the second floor. Straight to my parents' room we went. The door was softly opened by Father. The blinds were drawn, and a strange quiet made me feel as if we were in church. The great bed was let down, and on it lay Mother herself, with her lovely brown hair in two long braids as thick as my arms. I dared not speak, and my fear almost made me sink to the floor. What had I done now? Had I caused Mother to be ill? Why was Father so strangely silent? To be sure, he had let go of my hand and was stooping down over my mother, softly stroking her forehead. "Feeling better, *Gamla Gumma?*" How gentle his voice sounded! Just as it did when he was pleased with everything around him. "Anna-Mia wants to see her new sister."

"She is asleep. Where is Constance?" Mother's voice sounded very tired. But in my fear-ridden heart a new joy had leaped into being. A new sister had been brought to our house while we had been out in the country.

From the farthest corner of the room came Mor Karin, a woman usually hired when sickness came. In her arms was a little bundle wrapped in a pink quilt. She seated herself in a chair by Mother's bed and lifted a soft fold of flannel; then I saw a tiny face, red and curiously wrinkled. The eyes were closed, but the buttonhole mouth made little sucking movements. Father had raised the blind a little so that I could see the wee creature better. While I gazed at this new sister of mine, something big and warm came to life in my breast. I wanted to do something nice for her. I knew in a flash that dolls would never mean anything to me again. Then I remembered something I could do. Down in the vestibule on the

console I had left the birch-bark basket of wild strawberries. Off I dashed to fetch it. The protecting maple leaves I flung aside as I raced up the stairs.

"Look, I brought her some strawberries," I panted, holding out the basket to Mor Karin. "She can have them all."

"You silly child! The baby cannot eat strawberries." Father laughed softly as he took the basket out of my eager hands and passed it to Mother. "Smell them." He held the berries close to her face, and she sniffed the fragrance and smiled tenderly at him. But I felt hurt and resentful. Father had called me silly and laughed at me. Unobserved, I left the room and found comfort in Hulda's arms. Then a new terror overwhelmed me. My shawl had slipped off. Suppose the condition of my dress had been seen by Father and Mor Karin? That would mean punishment, even now.

But when the great piles of clean and ironed clothes were sorted out to be put

away or mended, Mother was only greatly puzzled about the enormous hole in the back of my red-and-white gingham skirt. Hulda and I kept the secret, however, and a new breadth of material was inserted when the skirt was let down, for I was a tall, " leggy " girl, always outgrowing my garments and wearing out more shoes than any other child—that is, according to Father's statements.

I always seemed to be breaking in new shoes. Father did not permit us to wear mended ones because, being in the shoe and leather business, he wanted his family to have the smartest and best footwear.

By this time Father had sold our Stora Fighult home. Now we lived in a tiny seaport trading-place called Figeholm; but this place was soon left for the more prosperous and up-to-date city of Oscarshamn, where Father opened a shoe and leather business, although retaining his tannery interest for the time being. My years in Oscarshamn were happy ones.

CHAPTER III

I ESCAPE PUNISHMENT

In Sweden, beggars and those dependent on people's generosity fared well at Christmas. In all well-to-do households, special batches of baking were set aside for the poor.

In connection with this, I remember one embarrassing incident—that is, embarrassing to Mother. One Saturday just before Christmas, I was allowed to go down on the Kalmar Sound for an hour of skating. I think I was nine years old at the time. This forenoon I met Stina Flink, the daughter of one of the poorer families in our little town. I was a democratic girl in the choice of playmates; in most cases, my parents did not interfere. Stina and her brother, Kalle, were both friends of mine.

VILLAGE PLAYMATES.
Such they were, my friendly village playmates with whom I spent a happy day.

SWEDISH INTERIOR.
With sturdy hand-made furniture, quaintly decorated and handed down from parents to children.

On this day the girl was dressed in her most ragged clothes; on her arm hung a big, empty basket. And I was smartly arrayed in high, brand-new skating boots, my nice fur-trimmed school coat, fur hat, and muff. Stina explained why she was so unusually shabby to-day, having been sent out by her parents to do the yearly Christmas begging. I must have looked interested in this expedition, for she suddenly invited me to come along. "Only, Anna-Mia, you must not wear those clothes," she said.

"But I haven't anything else to wear, except my new Christmas things," I protested.

"Come home with me. I think we can fix you up. It's great fun." Stina was always the quick girl to think up things to do in an emergency. "You see," she continued, "they'll not give you the *limpor,* sausages, apples, and other good things unless you are poorly dressed."

I am an impulsive person—action comes

first, reflection afterwards, often when it is too late. So I went home with Stina. A little while later, my friend and I set out together; outwardly I was a changed being. I wore a rather long grey-and-red striped skirt—a petticoat belonging to Stina's mother—which hid my nice skating boots. Instead of my own coat I wore one that Kalle had outgrown. Over this was tied an old and ragged plaid shawl folded crosswise, and the corners passed under my arms and tied in the back; my braids were tucked inside this shawl. For head-dress, there was a smaller square of woolen stuff, and that, too, was folded corner-wise and pinned under my chin, well drawn down to hide most of my face. Stina took care so that I wouldn't look too clean. A bit of soot from under the coffee-pot was rubbed into my nose and around the lips and eyes, and then partly wiped off so that it did the trick. A pair of big grey mittens darned in various colors were on my hands. Then

a basket, like my friend's, hung on my arm.

To say that I fully entered into the spirit of the adventure would hardly state the whole truth. Recklessness and wicked elation caused me to wriggle and tingle inwardly as we stood on the kitchen door-steps of the Mayor Stolpe's house. The Fru Borgmästare herself was in the kitchen and doled out to us the various cakes of *limpor,* the pieces of salt pork, and the potato-and-meat sausages set aside for the poor. It may be that I curtsied a trifle deeper than Stina, because Fru Stolpe patted my humbly bent shawled head, and told me that I was a polite little girl. From kitchen to kitchen we went. Only from one or two places were we forced to go out empty-handed. To me it was glorious fun. The forenoon flew by. I was greatly alarmed when the town clock struck two, for I should have been home an hour before. To be absent from a meal at our house, without a plausi-

ble reason, meant severe punishment, and fibbing was one of the deadliest of deadly sins. So I decided to tell my parents that I had helped Stina beg some Christmas supplies, spanking or not. Now I felt better. "It is always best to prepare for the worst," as our old Great-Aunt Botilda used to say.

Stina was hungry and so was I. We went back to her house, therefore—they lived in one room and shared the kitchen with another family. Kalle, too, had been out begging and had arrived home ahead of us. He had made the rye-coffee flavored with chicory, and we had black rye bread spread with *ister-smör,* pork fat seasoned with spices and used by poor people to make the coarse rye bread go down easier. Of course, we dared not cut into the soft fresh loaves of the Christmas bread; that would have been almost sacrilegious. But in my muff was a bag of *polka-grisar,* so we had each a few pieces of the peppermint-flavored candy to take

away the taste of the chicory and pork fat. Then we set out once more.

This time we ran into two other poor girls, also out begging, and whom I did not know. I feared discovery, but Stina explained that I was a friend of hers helping her just to-day. This seemed to satisfy their curiosity, so we passed on. In several of the kitchens I knew that the ladies were friends of my mother's; so in such places I modestly stood in the darkest corner, and as near the door as I could, keeping my head down and saying nothing. In one kitchen I felt ready to run away. Fru Bergman, Tante Herta, who was Mother's best-beloved friend, with her own hands put the *sur-limpa* and the sifted rye loafs into my basket, and also a little cake of golden-yellow *saffrans-kaka,* a delicacy seldom given to Christmas beggars. But then, Tante Herta was the most soft-hearted woman in our town. "Whose little girl are you?" she asked me, as I stood trembling behind

Stina. A paralyzing fear gripped me for a moment.

"I am Mother's little girl," I murmured with a dry throat.

"She is a cousin of mine," Stina boldly declared.

Now I felt less alarmed; Pastor Westenius had said in one of his sermons that before God all people were brothers and sisters. That, of course, made Stina's mother and mine sisters, so in a way, we two girls were cousins.

We continued until it was dark. I was tired, for the basket was very heavy—so heavy that Stina had been obliged to transfer some of my stuff into her own basket. I was glad to get out of the beggar's garb, wash my hands and face, and get into my own clothes once more.

As I cautiously opened our vestibule door, I saw light in the *förmak,* or best room; Mother had guests for coffee. It entered my mind to make a bold confession of what I had done. My heart gave

a leap, for among the voices I also heard Tante Herta's. So, in order to call attention to my arrival, I let my skates fall.

"Is that you, Anna-Mia?" Mother's voice sounded as usual. "Did you skate too far out to come home at noon?"

Now I had to come forward; there was no escape. A sudden feeling of fear made me weak-kneed. But first I had to greet Mother's four lady friends. Respectfully I curtsied and shook hands with them all. Now I felt a bit calmer.

"Mother, I didn't go skating," I stammered.

"But where were you all day?" Now an edge of inquisition had entered Mother's voice.

"I met Stina Flink, and went begging with her. We had such fun!" I stopped and drew a deep breath. "The ladies gave me just as much as they gave her. Fru Borgmästare said I was a polite girl."

Now, thank God! the truth was out, come what may.

"Anna-Mia!" Seldom did Mother's voice sound that way. I looked to Tante Herta for help. She understood, I think, for she set down her coffee-cup and drew me up to her.

"Come, dear, tell us all about it. Why did you go begging with this girl?"

"Stina asked me to come with her."

"Tell us about it," prompted Tante Lovisa, who was the wife of Father's business partner. "Did Karin give you a *limpa* and a bag of cookies and nuts?" A flash of fun leaped into her eyes. All at once I felt that Mother's friends would understand. So while they sipped their third cup or *lilla taren,* I told them all I could recall of the day's work.

And, wonder of wonders! I really did escape punishment. Mother explained that because I had told the truth, she would let me off. I do not think Father ever heard of my begging adventure. I know he would have punished me severely.

TROLLEHOLM.
A fine historical residence, age-defying and dignified.

PEASANT CHILDREN.
Enjoying some raw turnips.

CHAPTER IV

A SWEDISH CHRISTMAS

No other word in the Swedish language is so packed with happy thrills as the little word "Jul" which means Christmas. Even the dark, raw days of November pass somehow, in looking forward to the great festival season.

Our Christmas preparations begin early in the fall. We gather the hazel-nuts, and the finest and rosiest winter apples are put aside to hang on the tree. Early in November the hams and the many varieties of sausages hang in the smoke-house to be cured and smoked, and the meat is in the pickling-brine. All to be saved for the Christmas season which, in our country, lasts for several weeks.

In all well-to-do families there are new frocks, wraps, and shoes for all the mem-

bers, all of which are made ready in ample time. The long evenings are occupied with mysterious handiwork, often behind locked doors—gifts for the family. School-bags, tray-cloths, cushion-tops, and pretty mats and mottoes are to be embroidered in bright colors by us girls. Articles are to be carved in wood, such as photograph frames, paper-knives, nut-bowls. Mother is busy knitting a many-colored scarf with soft, fleecy zephyr-yarn for Father.

The bees have been industrious during the summer. There are great cakes of beeswax to be made into fragrant candles. My earliest-remembered Christmas work was to cut the candlewicks the required length and make a knot at one end, then push the other end of the wick through the tip of the tin mould. The knot prevents the wick from being pulled out while the wax is being poured into the mould. The pourer takes a firm hold of the wick so as to make it run straight through the

center of the candle, else the flame would be uneven and the candle burn lopsidedly. All the moulds are set in a tub of snow to harden the candles quickly, so that these moulds can be used over again.

While the candles hardened, it was my pleasant task to keep the wicks pulled straight, and each wick end must be in the center of its circle of wax. To get the finished candle out of the mould was accomplished by quickly plunging the mould into a pot of hot water, and the candle would slip out readily. To me this candle-making seemed almost a religious ceremony; we used these hand-made candles only at Christmas. Mother had a delightful, secret way of perfuming the wax with some fragrant oils, the odor of which I have been able to find nowhere else. She took that secret with her to the grave.

The last two weeks before Christmas are weeks of intense activities. Bread of several kinds must be baked in huge quantities, like the sweet and sour *limpa,* a spe-

cial Christmas bread flavored with caraway seeds and finely chopped dry orange-peel. Various kinds of wheat-cakes are made; also piles of the most amusing gingerbread figures: boys and girls, camels and horses, pigs and lambs, hearts and stars, and all are decorated most cunningly with almonds, currants, raisins, and red-and-white sugar.

Then there is the *Jul-ale* to be brewed and the *lut-fisk* to be prepared. The *lut-fisk* is a variety of sun-dried cod imported from Norway. It takes weeks of soaking in water and a strong wood-ash lye to soften this fish. Then the taste of the lye must be drawn out by further constant soaking in water, for the fish must be firm of texture and snow-white before it is fit to serve on Christmas Eve.

Before the great feast, every Swedish home is scrubbed from attic to cellar. Not a speck of dirt or dust is left when the twilight of December twenty-third falls. *Jul-afton*—the day before Christmas—is

also a great day. To us children it meant more than Christmas Day itself.

Early in the morning on December twenty-fourth, we were served coffee and *doppa* while we were still in bed, *doppa* literally meaning to dip in the coffee anything served with it, such as sweet rolls, rusks, or little dry cakes. This, our first breakfast, tasted delicious, for the night had been "nippy," the porcelain stove may have cooled off, and our maid had no time to make a fresh fire. That morning after our coffee and *doppa,* we were allowed to enter the chamber in which our parents slept. We came in to wish them "*Good Jul,*" and then were usually invited to creep under the coverlets and cuddle up close to Mother while waiting for our room to get warm so we could dress.

During the Christmas season, I always felt happier than usual, for no matter what mischief I did, I was not punished for it. And, somehow, it seemed so much

easier to be a well-behaved girl during the great festival season than at any other time of the year. Even my two name-days and my birthday were no exception; if I deserved punishment, I surely got it.

As soon as we had dressed and said our morning prayers, we were set to work unwrapping the decorations for the Christmas tree. Of course, we had no glittering, multi-colored ornaments such as American boys and girls hang on their trees. We had a few meager treasures of tinted and blown glass, gold and silver stars, angels of wax and paper with gauzy wings and shimmering robes; but we used home-made ornaments, such as tiny baskets for nuts and bonbons woven of bright paper strips. Then, too, we had gilded pine and spruce cones, also silver and gold-painted walnuts; and what with the red apples and gingerbread figures and the candles, our Christmas tree looked lovely.

Early in the forenoon, the cutting of

the tree was done. Father had permission from a farmer just outside our town to cut the tree he liked. If the weather was nice, my sister Constance and I were allowed to come with Father to the spruce forest and help him select the prettiest tree: he looked almost like a stately pagan priest in his fur coat and helmet-like fur cap, with the axe slung across his shoulder.

He always made a pretty little ceremony out of this tree-cutting. After a perfect one had been found, he would walk up to the nearest and largest tree, doff his cap, bow low before it, and say in a deep, solemn voice: "Dear Father Spruce, I salute you. May we bring your pretty child to our house to help us celebrate Christmas?"

For a few moments we were all tense, waiting for the reply. We girls imagined we saw the lofty top of the old tree bend slightly. This we told Father and he took it as a favorable sign. And with a

few strokes of his axe, the little tree was felled. Soon it lay on the sled, and we would return to the city. Most people bought their trees in town, but Father always preferred to cut ours himself. Next thing, the fragrant dark-green pyramid was set up in its green-painted wooden base and we began decorating it.

Soon the most tantalizing odors penetrated from the kitchen, and we suddenly discovered that we were so hungry, our mouths actually watered. In a short while Lotta, our maid, invited us to the kitchen to *doppa i grytan,* dip in the kettle.

On the stove stood a huge, burnished, copper kettle. In it had been boiling ever since early morning the entire head of a great pig, several sets of pigs' feet, beef tongues, various meat sausages, a whole ham, some salted beef, and pork. All these viands had been removed to several platters and stood steaming on the kitchen table ready to be carried into the dining-room where the Christmas table was

spread and would remain so until after December twenty-sixth.

On the white, scrubbed kitchen table stood serving plates, knives and forks, and some sliced *limpa.* Each participant in the *doppa* ceremony stuck his fork firmly into a slice of the *limpa,* then immersed it in the rich broth of the kettle until it was well soaked. It was then deftly flicked on the serving plate. Then one went into the dining-room where Father was busy slicing meat, ham, or tongue, distributing pigs' feet, or anything else desired from the Christmas kettle. There was also the huge, plump cheese to be cut and sampled; it was Father's task to cut into it and to eat the first slice, pronouncing it good.

Usually some friends came in for this meal to try the *Jul-ale,* wish the family *"Good Jul,"* and make plans for some sleighing party or other entertainment in which we could all take part.

In my home there was not the feeling of feverish hurry at Christmas, for all

things that could be done had been already attended to during the past few days. So a real holiday atmosphere was produced. All food had to be prepared on December twenty-fourth; for on the great day itself nobody was supposed to cook anything, except making the inevitable coffee. The same custom was followed on Good Friday, which was the most solemnly observed day of the year.

After we had literally stuffed ourselves with the many good things on the table, we returned to our various tasks. How we enjoyed sealing up the gifts! Even after thirty years of absence from Sweden, the odor of sealing-wax brings back the most vivid memories of the Christmas joys of my childhood. Of course we had no gay tinselled cords or holly ribbons or pretty embossed Christmas seals in those days; we used red twine, red sealing-wax, and white paper for our packages.

But no package—no matter how humble—was complete unless it had a jolly

jingle written on it. These little verses were supposed to be read aloud by the *Jul-gubbe* when the gifts were distributed, a person with a gift for rhyming being thereby given opportunity to express himself. Incidentally, the Swedish language is well adapted to poetry and song, for it is as liquid, musical, and sonorous as the Italian language.

The dinner on Christmas Eve is a stately meal. The table is a veritable "groaning board." Delicacies such as cluster raisins, Messina oranges, hothouse grapes, and imported nuts are set out. The wax candles, in many-branched candelabras with their crystal prisms, light the table, while overhead the chandeliers help to illuminate the room.

The odor from the steaming *lut-fish* greets the nostrils. Tender, transparent, white, in a great quivering mound, this food is brought in on a blue-and-white platter, with the rich cream sauce in the gravy dish. After the fish course the main

dish, *Jul-gröt,* is served. This dish is a rich, boiled rice-pudding, flavored with stick cinnamon and decorated with ground cinnamon and powdered sugar. In the center is a little lake of melted butter, and around the edge a deep ditch filled with honey. In the *Jul-gröt,* which is served with milk, a *lucky almond* is always buried.

But it is an immemorial custom that each person who is to partake of this special food must first *Rimma för Gröten,* that is, he must make up a nonsense rhyme—usually something complimentary to the hostess or the cook, or one's table neighbor.

In my home Father always began. Each one in turn was expected to follow, the best he could. The stupid ones had a bad time of it; they stammered and turned red with the effort.

One story is related about a Christmas Eve dinner at the Royal Castle in Stockholm. The turn had come to Bellman, the

court poet, to make up a *gröt-rhyme*. He had been placed between the Countess Griis of Bollnäs and her stupid, boorish son. Both were heartily disliked by the poet.

"Now, Bellman," the king prompted, "it is your turn; do your prettiest."

The poet raised his wine-glass, bowed to his two table neighbors, and rhymed:

"From the Rhinelands we get wine
And from Bollnäs we get swine."

All but the countess and her son laughed. But the king protested that the rhyme was too personal.

"Bellman, we must have something dealing with a royal subject," he said.

Once more the poet tried, and this time he again raised his glass to the Countess Griis and her son. (I forgot to state that *Griis,* or *gris,* in Swedish, means pig, hog, swine, of either gender.) This was his second rhyme:

"Solomon was Absalom's brother
And the sow is the hog's mother."

"Bellman, you are hopeless! I must send you into exile," laughed the king, pleased with his favorite entertainer, while the countess and her dull son tried hard to seem at ease.

Our own dinner is finished with "torta," nuts and fruit. Before the *Jul-gröt* is removed from the table, a generous portion is put into a dish with an extra lump of butter in the center. This is for the "Tomte-gubbe," or the "Good Luck Brownie," who is said to live in the attic of every well-ordered house in Sweden. The delicacy is placed in the attic stairway, and at midnight the "Tomte-gubbe" comes to have his feast. On Christmas morning, Lotta always showed me the empty dish. But the "lucky almond" in the *Jul-gröt!* Oh, with what eagerness we all looked for it in our individual dishes! The one who found it would be especially fortunate during the coming year.

After the dinner, we all joined hands and marched about the Christmas tree singing old folk-songs and ballads. Usually Father excused himself, saying that he had some important business to attend to. As we were romping and singing, there came a fearful pull on our door-bell. We all stood still, waiting.

Mother bravely went to the door. When she opened it and looked outside, there stood the *Jul-gubbe* as real as real could be. He entered the vestibule and stamped into the living-room. He slapped his arms; he puffed and he panted as if he had been running. He wore a mask showing only a pair of keen grey-blue eyes through holes cut for the purpose of seeing. But it was a pleasant ruddy mask, with long, curly whiskers of grey.

We children stood at a little distance, hardly daring to breathe, for usually the "Jul-gubbe" carried a great sack when he came to our house. In fear we wondered what had happened. Still, Mother

did not seem upset about this unusual occurrence. Instead, she offered him a glass of the *Jul-ale* which he sipped slowly; and then, very deliberately, wiped his beard with the back of his gloved hand. He rose as if to go, for he bowed to Mother and was already at the door, when sister Margareta set up a lusty howl: "Mother, don't let him go! He always brought us presents other years."

Upon hearing this distressful plea, the *Jul-gubbe* gave a happy chuckle, and went out to the vestibule, where, to be sure, we all saw the huge sack filled to the bursting point with packages.

Strangely enough, we all received the very things we had wished for. It was a pity Father could not be there to hear the clever verses on his own gifts. But he was much pleased when, a while later, he returned and found his pile of gifts waiting for him. At Christmas Father was a different person, it seemed. He was gentle, and even I dared to offer to do little

things for him—warm his slippers and fill his great meerschaum pipe, and even strike the match and light it for him.

Then our day before Christmas ended with Mother gathering us before the living-room fire and reading to us from the great Doré illustrated Bible the story about the birth of Jesus. We were sent to bed early this evening, for in the morning we all attended the *Jul-otta* or early Christmas Mass in the church ten miles out in the country. Father and Mother had been married in this church; so perhaps it was for the sake of happy memories that they went there on Christmas morning to the early mass.

In Sweden we have the pretty custom of setting lighted wax-tapers in the windows to burn all Christmas night. The fires are also replenished late that night, so the whole house is warm and cozy as we rise at three o'clock to be ready when the big sleigh, drawn by two splendid horses, comes along to pick us up. Count-

ing the driver, we are eight people, all packed down warm and snug in sheepskin robes, until only our eyes and noses are visible. Then, with the music of the two dozen little bronze bells on the harnesses, we set off at a lively pace.

I wonder if any outdoor pleasure can compare with a drive through a snowed-under spruce forest on a cold frosty night! The poetry of countless stars shining in the blue-black sky; a waning moon hanging among the tree-tops; our sleigh lanterns casting weird shadows along the blue-white road.

After an hour or so of swift travel, we see the church, all lit up, leap into view. The church hill is dotted with unharnessed sleighs of every description, the horses being kept in the parish stables. Pedestrians in gay groups arrive, each group led by a lantern-bearer. And then three great bells ring for the third time—*samman*—like friendly arms of sounds reaching out and drawing us all into the church. All the

pews are filled. Numberless tapers shine on ruddy peasant faces. Herr Jungström, the organist and cantor, sits on his bench in the organ loft, and soon the pipe-organ peals forth the mighty Lutheran Psalm-melody, while the congregation sings heartily, *"War hälsad sköna morgon stund,"*—We hail thee, wondrous morning hour!

It seems to me that the very walls tremble and the roof of the church is about to take flight. Such singing is seldom heard. The Swedish people love to sing and express their joys and their longings in song. Then comes the stately Lutheran Mass with the priest or *Kyrkoherde* and his assistant, both arrayed in rich vestments. During the long sermon, there is, of course, many a nodding head. I never dared to sleep in church although it was ever a great strain to keep awake. Finally the droning voice of the priest says "Amen" and the recessional psalm is taken up.

After the service, one visits and meets friends in the parish house. Hot coffee and *doppa* are served. At last, in the grey-blue dawn, we are once more packed down into our sleigh, and the wild, swift ride home begins. Everybody tries to reach his own village before everybody else. It is no uncommon sight to find sleighs overturned by the roadside, their occupants half-buried under their fur robes and the deep drifts. All because of a superstition that the one to arrive home first will have the best and largest crop the coming year!

All of us remained quietly at home on Christmas Day. We children played with our new toys and read to each other out of our new story-books.

Next day the Christmas festivities began. In my country, there was senseless over-eating of rich food during this season, and among the men, much drinking. So, when finally the holidays were over—well past the middle of January—the peo-

ple were half-sick and sluggish from the after-effects of too much food and drink.

There was a pagan flavor to many of the queer customs and legends connected with this season. In my home, at the party on December twenty-sixth, we usually had a pig roasted whole. It was a mouth-watering sight to see *nasse* roasted to a golden brown, and kneeling on a huge platter with an apple in his mouth, and a crimpy paper frill decorating his curled-up tail, to be carved by Father.

This roasted pig was a purely heathen symbol. In Wallhalla, the home of our old gods and dead heroes, a huge roasted boar was served and eaten each night, and behold, the next morning the boar was whole again. A symbol of Nature's ever-renewing powers!

Then there was the *Jul-brasa* or fire, to be kept lighted until the end of Saint Stephen's Day. This symbolized the return of the sun.

We also had a very pretty legend,

possibly of Christian origin—that on Christmas night, the animals were given the power of speech for one hour. When Aunt Inga told me this, I immediately wanted to hear the animals talk, and so to give this fable credence, my aunt adroitly related a story of a servant girl who had also wanted to make sure that this really took place on Holy Night. So she hid herself in the cow-stable on Christmas Eve to witness the miracle, but alas, the next morning she discovered that she had lost her power of speech. It may be, said Aunt Inga, this had happened so that she could not tell human beings what the animals had been talking about.

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CHAPTER V

HOW A TAME BEAR BROUGHT ME DISGRACE

SINCE Father's shoe and leather business began to go well, we lived in a nice, modern house facing the Old Square in the city of Oscarshamn, in the eastern part of the province of Småland. These were happy, interesting days, packed with study and work, and with play hours when my tasks were completed.

But both my parents demanded absolute obedience from us children. If we deserved punishment, there was no escape. If I had been less impulsive and had thought before I acted, I know now, looking back on my childhood, that I should have been able to avoid many painful experiences. Father and Mother, like other good parents, wanted us to grow up to be useful, law-abiding members of the community. And they knew that if children

are not taught in the home respect for authority, they will be obliged later in life to learn that valuable lesson or suffer the consequences.

In my memory, one occurrence stands out especially vivid, and my punishment was well deserved:

An Italian with a hand-organ and a tame bear had come to town. The man turned the crank of the organ, and the bear danced with a stout pole clasped in his front paws. He was a most delightful creature as he stepped to the music on his clumsy hind legs. Only a slender brass chain, fastened to his nose-ring, held him captive. His obedience to the slightest pull of the chain held us all spellbound. A huge crowd had gathered in the Old Square, and I was among that crowd, a fascinated girl of ten.

Father had seen me from his store window, and Sven, the errand boy, was sent to command me to come home. I was forbidden to go out in the square while

the bear and his master were there. Of course, I had no intention of being disobedient, so I tried to make the best of things as they were.

Fortunately, Mother sent me to the drug-store to buy some worm-seed for my sister Constance. I was given a fifty-öre silver coin to pay for the stuff. Sven had told me a minute before that the Italian and the bear had gone over to the New Square. And I must cross that square to reach the drug-store.

Right in front of Hotel Kung Oscar I saw the bear and the Italian once more. It was the most natural thing in the world for me to stop and look on. Father's forbidding me to go out in the Old Square had nothing to do with my stopping a minute while doing an errand for Mother, so I felt no uneasiness.

The bear did his most cunning tricks, and the most alluring melody from *Traviata* was played. How I did love that clever bear! At last the Italian went

around among the crowd with his hat. Copper coins from all directions soon covered the bottom of his battered old felt hat. I had no copper coin to give him. Almost against my own volition but with a grand gesture, I dropped that half-crown piece into the hat. The man gave me a flashing smile and bowed low before me. His bowing flattered me. He and the bear moved on, followed by the crowd.

Overhead the thunder rumbled. The day was sultry, and the sun shone fitfully, but no one seemed to pay any attention to the weather. We were all too busy watching the bear. The minuet from *Don Juan* was now ground out, and the beast danced to its slow, stately rhythm.

To this day I can understand how human beings can forget home, honor, and solemnly given promises because of music, movement, and homage, for the glowing dark eyes of the Italian often rested on me. It may be that he hoped I would drop another fifty-öre into his hat.

Lotta was finally sent to find me, and I was brought home in disgrace. To fib would do no good, so I confessed. This time Father himself took me in hand. . . . I was locked up in the dark, stuffy broom-closet under the garret stairs. And here in the dark among the cleaning paraphernalia, I had ample time to think over my bad behavior. I had been in this predicament before, and knew that it would be useless to pound on the door, for neither Lotta nor Mother herself would think of letting me out until Father gave them permission to do so. Of course, I would be released in an hour or two. Time dragged fearfully in my dark and tiny prison which was getting as hot as an oven. I felt thirsty and hungry, too. If it hadn't been for the increasing thunder, I might have gone to sleep.

Now and then flashes of lightning would show between the door cracks. One terrific thunder crash seemed to shake the whole town, and I knew that the lightning

had struck near by. Fear made me tremble and perspire. Suppose it was our house or some other house in the square? The fire would soon reach me, and I should be burned to death.

Frantically I hammered on the door and begged to be let out, but not a sound came. Our house seemed deserted. Then, faintly I heard voices reaching me, and sounds of running steps in the square. Louder, and closer came the voices:

"The lumber-yard is on fire! The saw-mill was struck by lightning!"

Now I understand why our house was so quiet. Father and his business partner had a tannery just across the river, almost facing the lumber-yard. My parent, and everybody else, had rushed off to see the fire. I was forgotten—left behind. Or else Father had decided to add to my punishment by keeping me away from the fire. I had never seen a really big one. It must be a splendid sight to see a whole lumber-yard burning!

Finally when Lotta came to let me out, I had a horrible sense of loss. I had been prevented from seeing a rare sight. A foolish and childish resentment against my father caused me to avoid his presence as much as possible, and I bribed my sister Constance to do any errand that would usually be my task and which would take me to Father's store.

Then, a week later, word came that I was invited to spend the rest of the summer at Uncle Petter's farm at Rönnevik. He would come the following day to fetch me. Again I was happy, for I should have my Cousin Herrman to play with, and thousands of interesting things to see and do: and, best of all, I would not be shut up in a hot, stuffy closet. Of course, I would be a well-behaved girl and a credit to Father and Mother.

Uncle Petter came the following day. My clothes and a few of my books were packed and ready. Mother had suggested that I keep up my studies during the

summer, for there would be some rainy days during which Herrman and I could study together.

Finally we were ready. I went to the store to bid Father good-bye. And, marvelous to relate, when I shook hands with him, he slipped a two-crown silver piece into my palm. Tears blurred my eyes as I looked up at him. How I longed to fling myself into his arms and kiss him, but there stood the errand boy grinning at me. My courage failed. Still, I remembered Father's smile, and I felt certain that he loved me.

CHAPTER VI

ON UNCLE PETTER'S FARM

Uncle Petter was a member of the Swedish *Riksdag*—that is, he held a position similar to that of a United States Congressman. He represented his district in the Second Chamber of the Swedish parliament. He and my father for some obscure reason did not like each other, but Mother dearly loved her cousin and his family.

Uncle came in his homespun *vadmal* clothes; a typical Swedish farmer, as far as appearance went, but a man of culture and a true gentleman. His hobby was the breeding of race-horses; beautiful, wing-footed animals that won prizes at the Royal Derby. He also specialized in the raising of fancy stock: his pigs and sheep and cattle always carried off the highest prizes at our county fairs. He had great

faith in Nature, and felt it a privilege to be allowed to help her perfect some of the creatures she had evolved.

In driving out to Rönnevik, Uncle Petter and I talked about many things. He had often visited, while in Stockholm, another relative of Mother's, a man who was court physician to the Queen. I had never seen Cousin Carl, although Mother often spoke of him and how he, on his rare visits to Mörtfors, his home, used to be kept busy attending to all the ailing people of the parish—they all regarded him as a kind of wonder doctor, partly because it was for him all " a labor of love "; he refused to take money for his service.

I wish my American boy and girl friends could see my uncle's farm, some distance from the State Highway, as I saw it this summer afternoon bathed in a golden haze! Neat rail-fences enclosed each field; sleek cattle grazed on the hillsides and in the pastures. From the meadows, loaded hay-carts drawn by ox-

teams wended their slow way to the farm where the hay was to be put into sheds.

The farmhouse was a large, two-story, gabled structure built of timber. It was stained a rich dark-red, with white trimmings, cornices, and window frames. An avenue of great chestnut trees led up to the front yard, which was enclosed by a red-and-white picket fence and a hedge of lilac bushes. There was a veranda with slender white pillars supporting climbing vines.

Otto, the stable boy, opened the gate for us and led the horses away to be unharnessed. Aunt Inga and Cousin Herrman stood on the veranda ready to welcome me. How tall my cousin had grown! He was the image of his mother: fair-haired, blue-eyed, ruddy of face, and splendidly strong. He was a year and a half older than I, so it was natural for me to look up to him as a leader.

After Aunt Inga had given me a real bear-hug and kissed me, it was Herrman's

turn. His eyes danced with joy, and he almost crushed some of my ribs when he flung his arms around me. I returned his kiss with all my heart. Secretly I looked upon him as my own brother, for once, when I was recovering from a severe case of fever, Mother had told me confidentially that she felt sure Herrman was none other than my little brother Emil, who had died shortly before Herrman was born. It is hard to tell where Mother had come upon the idea of reincarnation. Still, I felt closer to my cousin than I did to my own two sisters.

After I had washed myself and changed my frock, I was taken to the kitchen to meet the two maids who helped Aunt Inga with the housework. Selma was the daughter of one of the "crofters," and Manda was a poorhouse orphan whom my aunt had long ago taken charge of. Manda adored her benefactress; this was plain even to me.

Both girls accepted me as a member of

the household, and I was soon busy helping with the preparation of the evening meal. Never shall I forget how delicious the fresh-baked bread, the newly-churned butter, the smoked ham, and the creamed spinach tasted! Then, to finish the meal, we had wild strawberries with cream thick and deep-yellow, like old ivory; there were tumblers of wonderful buttermilk, also bowls of *filebunke,* clabbered milk, which was eaten with a sprinkling of ground ginger and sugar.

After supper Herrman took me out to the milking lane to see the cows being milked. Those gentle cows! How I loved them all! Each one had such a pretty name: *Gullstjärna, Snö-ros, Smörblomma,* etc., meaning, Gold-star, Snow-rose, and Buttercup, respectively. No wonder those cows gave abundant, rich milk! They were better-treated than thousands of working people the world over. The dairy-maids, Britta and Lena, truly loved all those twenty-six cows,

judging from the manner in which the cows minded these two sturdy girls who would sing and talk to the animals while milking.

To me, milking seemed easy work; and, unwisely, I told Britta so. She laughed good-naturedly and invited me to try it. Pleased, I sat down on the three-legged stool and took the empty wooden *stäva* between my knees, grasped two of the four teats on the udder of *Snö-ros,* and began to pull downward, also to give a gentle pressure so as to squeeze out the milk. But not a single drop came. I pulled harder, and my wrists and fingers began to feel tired. Then, the cow suddenly flicked her tail impolitely across my face and walked off. The two girls did not laugh at me; for this I was grateful. Lena merely tactfully hinted that milking was not the work for city *fröknar* with soft, white, little hands and slim wrists.

Six years later, when I arrived in America and found that men did the milk-

ing, I felt very indignant, for a cow is such a gentle, feminine creature, and to me it did not seem quite proper that men should do that work.

Herrman next showed me a number of oxen grazing in a near-by pasture and resting after their day of hard work. They, too, looked content and docile. I was also taken to the enclosure where *Nero,* the bull, was kept in " solitary confinement." He was a dark-brown, stately, magnificent creature of some famous English breed. Because of an ugly temper, he was not allowed to be with the cows or oxen in the pastures, but was instead kept in a special enclosure which had a strong fence around it. This animal, when irritated, had been known to take a length of ordinary rail-fence on his splendid horns and break into the clover meadows.

Nero was Uncle Petter's special pet. It was a thrilling sight to see Uncle enter the enclosure and fearlessly go up to the bull, petting him and talking to him. In

the parish it was common talk how *Rikdagsman* Häggvall had such a strange power over all his animals. I asked him how he did it. He replied with a smile:

"Anna-Mia, love will do wonders in dealing with both men and beasts."

The following morning I was shown the rest of the farm inmates—funny, long-legged colts which followed their pretty mothers about the pastures and trotted at their side when these mothers were taken out driving, lambs with their innocent little faces so adorable, and several calves in a special pasture. I loved the little ducks and chicks and the stately cock, that was so gallant and so brave when the swooping hawk hung over the barnyard.

Herrman finally showed me his own pet, a plump, white, half-grown pig. A near-tragedy had, as it were, thrown *Nasse* on my cousin's mercy. The sow that was *Nasse's* mother, could nurse only ten at a time, while she had been blessed with a litter of eleven little ones. So, poor Num-

ber Eleven had nearly starved until Uncle Petter told his son that this left-over little pig would be his if Herrman could manage to raise it by hand. My cousin consulted with his mother, and Otto was sent down to the village to buy a rubber nipple; this and a bottle of milk slightly warmed solved the problem. *Nasse* drank his fill, gave a grunt of satisfaction, and fell asleep. And, whenever he woke up and squealed, he was given the bottle.

The little pig grew faster than his ten brothers and sisters that were nursed by their mother. He became deeply attached to Herrman, whom he always spied far off and would run to meet with grunts of pleasure. Lena and Britta, the two dairy-maids, always saw to it that *Nasse* was well fed and kept clean. He was a pig of excellent breed, and in a year he would be full grown and fetch a good sum at the county fair. I felt especially flattered when *Nasse* ate the sugar cookie Manda had slipped into my pocket after

I had helped her wipe the breakfast dishes.

I have already mentioned the lambs; dear, foolish, meek little things, so helpless and appealing, as they trotted behind their mothers, flicking their funny little tails, and nursing while their mamas grazed on the hillsides. But the father of all these cunning little creatures was *Thor,* Uncle Petter's prize ram, an import from Scotland and quite a valuable and marvelous beast, with his proudly carried head crowned with a pair of gracefully curved, twisted horns. *Thor,* like *Nero,* was mean-tempered, and therefore he, too, had to be kept by himself.

My ignorance of the dangers of life on a farm nearly cost me my life. One forenoon, soon after my arrival at Rönnevik, I set out alone to pick strawberries on a hillside which Britta had pointed out as we drove the cows to the milking lane the night before. I had full confidence in my ability to take care of myself. I knew

Nero was in his accustomed enclosure; and he was the only one of the farm animals I had any respect for. I had not yet met *Thor*. The strawberries were luscious and grew in large, ruddy patches all about me.

Herrman had promised to join me after he had taken the outgoing mail down to the village. Happy and busy, I was picking away, eating as many berries as I put into the pail, which was a four-*liter* one. I had saved the thickest patches for Herrman. Swedish wild strawberries are no larger than medium-size cranberries, so it takes some time to fill a four-*liter* pail. But I hummed a ballad, utterly at peace with the world.

While I was stooping over and picking away, I had all of a sudden a sensation as if every vertebræ in my spine had been swiftly stacked up like *priffe* chips, then I fell on my face. After a few minutes of dazed wonder, I scrambled to my feet to see what had hit me.

"Anna-Mia, look out for *Thor!*" Herrman's distressed voice came. I saw my cousin coming on a run towards me. A dark, swift-moving mass struck him down, and he fell a few meters from where I stood. I staggered over to where he had fallen on his side. He lay very still. Just as I drew a scared breath, intending to call for help, "Wump!!!!" this time *Thor's* broad forehead and my diaphragm were brought in contact for a painful second—that is, painful to me. Down I went a second time. Now I had enough for one day, and I, too, lay still, for to tell the truth I had the wind knocked out of me.

Some time later I woke up and found myself in Aunt Inga's own bed, between cool, fresh linen sheets that smelled of lavender, and I learned that our doctor from town was on his way out to see Herrman and me. Otto had jumped on *Sleipner,* the fastest of Uncle's horses, to bring help. My first question was about Herr-

man. Had *Thor* killed him? My aunt assured me that Herrman was alive, but somewhat shaken up by being knocked down by the ram.

After a little while the doctor came. Father was with him. He looked quite upset and followed every move of the doctor as the latter did various and painful things to my body. I was more eager to have the doctor attend my cousin, for he had looked so queer, lying there in the sun limp and pale.

After Doctor Holmgren had examined Herrman, I was told that both of us must remain quiet for a week or so. I did not mind this so much; I was selfishly glad that my cousin, too, had to stay in bed as long as I.

Father's coming did me more good than the doctor's care and medicine. Perhaps, after all, I was not the " black sheep " in our family. He came over to the bed and bent down and stroked my forehead for a moment. How I longed to have him

lift me in his arms and hold me close! Still, the fact that he had taken the trouble to come out to see me was too wonderful for words.

Inside of a week Herrman and I were up and about. The fame of *Thor's* wickedness had grown, and that year he took first prize at the Fall Fair, which was also the agricultural exhibition. Uncle Petter was so pleased over this that he gave Herrman and me each a ten-crown piece, *För sveda och värk*—compensation for suffering endured!

During my week in bed I kept wondering why Father had come out to see me, and not Mother. Later I learned from Aunt Inga that a little baby was expected to arrive before I returned to the city.

Ah, those happy weeks at Rönnevik! Deep down in my heart was the knowledge that after all, in spite of numberless spankings, my Father still cared for me. Curiously enough, I hardly gave a thought to the little baby that my parents ex-

pected. Perhaps I wanted to see the baby first, before it could become a reality.

Life on a farm proved most fascinating to me. Each day was packed with fresh experiences. I saw enormous cheeses made, drank the delicious whey, and ate the curd. I helped to churn butter, and tasted real buttermilk with a tangy, sour-cream flavor that makes this beverage so distinctive and wholesome. We picked bushels of luscious, dark-red cherries and great red-and-yellow gooseberries, also purple and yellow plums, almost as large as hen's eggs, and sweet as sugar. There were also early pears and Astrachan apples to be gathered and sent to the city market.

It was delightful to gather the freshly laid eggs. Aunt Inga had shown me the nests of all the "laying" hens, but one day I found a whole nestful of eggs under the planked floor of a shed. Eagerly I put them into my apron and ran in to

show my find to my aunt. Fifteen eggs, all warm. To me it seemed as if a number of the hens had formed a sort of " laying-club " and met in secret so as to fool us all. I felt proud and important.

But my pride and joy were short-lived. Auntie told me in her quiet, kindly way that all those eggs belonged to a " sitting " hen which insisted on having her nest in this out-of-the-way place. Hurriedly I was sent back to replace the eggs; it may be that the poor hen had not yet missed them. Some days later this same prudent bird came proudly forth with a brood of thirteen little chicks. So it seemed that no great harm had come from my zeal as an egg-gatherer.

A Swedish farm is usually an orderly and homelike place. The barns, stables, granaries, and other outbuildings are, like the dwelling itself, stained a rich, dark-red, with trimmings of white; usually, the roofs are thatched with rye-straw. All these buildings are placed at some distance

from the farmhouse, and set about a square barnyard with hen-house, pig-pen, and ice-house at one end. There are generally a row of hay and straw stacks and piles of stable manure at one end.

Close to the farmhouse is the smoke-house where meat, hams, and sausages are cured, and where the baking and laundry work is done. In this smoke-house the rich, dark ale is also brewed at Christmas. One section of this, the *Brygg-stuga,* is equipped with the hand-loom, warping reels, spinning-wheels, and the tools needed for manufacturing textiles for garments and household use. For, among the Santesons, my mother's people, it was part of one's education to know all the processes the wool and the flax must pass through before these products are converted by the hand-loom into linen sheets, dress goods for the women, or *vadmal* for the men. Even table damask and curtain scrim, coverlets, hangings, and rugs were woven on Swedish farms.

Four years later, Aunt Inga herself taught me to card wool, spin both flax and woolen yarn, and help with the preparation of the warp; as a final triumph, I was even permitted to sit down at the loom and try my hand at weaving. To be sure, it was only a length of sheeting I was permitted to practise on at first, but I gained respect for those who produced beautiful woven stuff by hand. The most fascinating part of the making of woven stuff was the dyeing of the woolen yarn.

My aunt scorned aniline dyes. She had a marvelous knowledge of vegetable dyes, and from bark, herbs, and berries contrived the most charming and lasting—almost fadeless—dyes. To be sure, she bought certain chemicals which were used in conjunction with the vegetable dyestuff of our fields and forests, but they were usually vegetable products such as "gall-apples" or Brazilian wood-chips, and a very powerful and costly red dye called *conchinelle* which was supposed to

TYPICAL SLEEPING APARTMENT.

EXAMPLES OF SWEDISH HANDICRAFT.
Woven textiles, embroideries, and basketry.

come from an insect found in the tropics. The color obtained from this stuff was the most wonderful red—deep-glowing, velvet-soft and rich.

CHAPTER VII

MY FRIENDS AND PLAYMATES, ALSO A FEW TALES

I HAD, when I returned from Uncle Petter's farm, one more sister—the baby girl was three weeks old when I saw her the first time. Little Maria was more than ten years my junior, and I had all the " big-sister " affection for her. Mother allowed me to help take care of her, for we could afford only one servant.

Constance and I were three years apart. As our birthdays came on the seventh and the eighth of March, we were given a joint birthday party each year—that is, we had the party on Constance's birthday one year and on mine the following year. My sister's friends brought gifts to her, and my friends remembered me with presents, but the two groups were entertained together. A supper was served.

Then came guessing-games, "dress-up-charades," and conundrums. There was, of course, also singing and recitations by those who were clever and trained in these arts.

Dancing and kissing games were not even thought of. Not that my parents were prudish, but I was taught to regard kissing and other forms of intimacy between boys and girls as improper; that no nice girl would allow a boy to put his arms around her. Mother had assured me that no young man had been permitted to kiss her when she was a girl. Father was the only man she had ever kissed, and that only after they were formally engaged.

Nevertheless when I was old enough, I was allowed to have boy friends come to see me, to take me out sailing in summer; and, during the winter, they would come with their skates, and we would race over the ice or sail the ice-boats on the Kalmar Sound. These boys were the sons of my parents' friends; lads of good family and

carefully reared. Ideals of chivalry and honor had been instilled into their souls from their earliest years.

It may be that I was more fortunate than many other girls in numbering among my young Swedish friends boys who were fun-loving rather than sentimental. Each Sunday after church in summer we youngsters made our plans for the " hikes " and sailing parties to distant islands and other points of interest. Naturally, such excursions were always chaperoned by some responsible adult who was youthful enough to enter into our fun.

One such an all-day excursion was planned to a low mountain plateau close to the shore of the Baltic. From the highest point of the plateau, if the weather was clear, one could see the island of Öland, with wide stretches of the sea and the green coastland.

We had all breakfasted heartily and our midday meal was to be eaten after we had reached our destination. Our maid,

Lotta, had charge of us to-day, children ranging in age between eight and twelve years. At that time I was eleven; one of the boys, Carl-Anton, was twelve; Constance, too, was with us, for Mother had let her come when Lotta, who was already twenty-five years old, promised to take special care of my sister.

We were a happy group of children—fifteen healthy, boisterous youngsters—and we sang as we marched along the highway, swinging our food baskets. School was over for the summer, and winter seemed far off.

After an hour's steady walking, some of the younger members of our party began to clamor for a resting-spell, so when a cool, shady knoll was found, we climbed the rail-fence and Lotta produced her crochet work. We all became less talkative as Maja Elmdal, a newcomer to Oscarshamn, promised to tell us about *Blenda of Värend,* the brave peasant woman whose clever ruse had saved some

of Maja's ancestors from death at the hands of the Danish soldiers; for at that long-ago time Denmark and Sweden were not the good friends they are to-day, but were often at war with each other.

One day news came to Värend that the Danish soldiers were on their way to kill, plunder, and burn in the larger and most prosperous villages of the countryside. At this time all the able-bodied men had been drafted into the army, and only a few tottering old men, some little boys and, of course, the women, were left to defend Värend. Terror gripped the hearts of many, but with wisdom and initiative, Blenda, one of the sturdy peasant women, had soon organized an army of defense. She gathered about her all those who had strong legs and lusty lungs, old and young alike. But each member of her strangely assorted "army" was bidden to carry some noise-producing device. Then a dozen or so of the small boys were sent ahead to stir up a thick cloud of dust with

tree-branches which they shoved before themselves on the dusty highway. Close behind the little boys came the villagers, led by Blenda.

Such shouting and such a fearful din had never been heard in Värend. Iron and copper kettles and lids were beaten, empty wooden *stävas* were used as drums, *skärror,* similar to the " bull-roarers " used by some savage tribes at religious ceremonies, produced a terrible racket; then there were all those people shouting and singing battle-songs, adding to the dreadful din of this onward-marching " army of defenders."

The Danes spied the dust cloud far off. They heard the mighty volume of terrific noise, and were stricken with a great fear of this still unseen foe. As one man, they turned and fled; not one of them dared look behind. As they reached the Danish encampment, panting and trembling, they declared that a powerful army of Swedes was at their heels. The officer in charge

of the encampment saw the wisdom of seeking safety for himself and his men, and so Värend was saved by Blenda and her willing helpers.

This successful routing of the Danes by a few scores of women and children reached the ear of the Swedish king, and he gave orders that all the women in Värend should be allowed to wear a special type of dress to commemorate Blenda's deed and the saving of their homes and lives from destruction by the Danes. To this day the colorful and distinctive dress of Värend is proudly worn on festive occasions by the women of this part of my province. For Värend is not so very far from the place of my birth. Maja Elmdal's mother owned one of those historical costumes, and Maja promised to let us all see it some time. Perhaps she could induce her mother to put it on some day for our pleasure.

Another brave *Småländing* of former times was a general in the army of Charles

THE VÄREND DRESS.
The picturesque commemorative costume worn by the women of Värend Småland.

XII, Magnus Stenbock. Carl-Anton told us how the general had gathered about him nearly all the peasant lads of Småland and proceeded to make soldiers out of this raw material. There was not money enough to equip these lads with uniforms of any kind, so they wore garments made of goatskin. The Danes laughed at Stenbock and his "goat-boys." But courageous hearts beat beneath those queer garments, for a leader's example will always affect his followers. One of General Stenbock's sayings was: "Look ferocious, and the Dane will run." Another time, he advised his "goat-boys" not to shoot until they were close enough to see the whites of the enemies' eyes.

Carl-Anton and I always quarreled because he had a great love for warriors. I fear I was born a pacifist. Well I can recall tales told to us children when our mother's ninety-eight-year-old great-aunt Tant Botilda, came to visit us—tales of horror—for she had lived in Schleswig-

Holstein at a time when Germany and Denmark were at war with each other—tales so terrible that I could not sleep the night she told us of her experiences. Those stories made a powerful impression on my mind. But Tant Botilda could also recall the crowning of six Swedish kings. Her memory was very remarkable—in a sense she lived altogether in the past. Her own father had been a soldier and had taken part in the war between Norway and Sweden in 1814, but fortunately that war was scarce begun before it was over, and the result was a union between Norway and Sweden which lasted for nearly a hundred years. It was during the rule of the wise and gentle Oscar II that Norway regained its independence. To be sure, both countries have already profited by their separation.

It is with a feeling of pride that I can call Sweden and Norway to-day better friends than they have ever been. And both countries have enjoyed peace during

one hundred and eleven years—a record to be proud of indeed.

This day during our trip to the plateau, as we set off once more down the highway, we caught up with a farm lad jogging along in an empty hay-cart.

"Give us a ride, please," we cried as he lumbered past in his great ox-drawn cart, and he stopped and let us scramble in. This was fun; we sang and hurrahed as we went on. But soon our joy was over, for he was turning his team into a lane towards the place where his meadow lay, so we had to pick up our baskets, spring out again, resuming our "hike." After half an hour's walking, we came to the mountain plateau, and the climb to the top began.

After we had reached the highest point, we could see far out over the Baltic, where the ships and steamers seemed to slip off the edge of the world. Then, when we turned our eyes inland, we saw endless stretches of fields and meadows with red-

stained farm-buildings, like toy houses, nestling among the greenness.

While we were eating, Lotta related a tale about how her grandfather one night while tending a charcoal kiln in a wood that she pointed out to us was visited by the wood-nymph who came into his hut, wet and shivering with the cold. She was very beautiful and wore rich garments. The hem of her dress was soaked, and she stood before the fire warming herself. Then Lotta's grandfather saw a fluffy, grey tail peep out from under her skirt-hem. Now the charcoal-burner understood that his visitor was the wood-nymph. He dared not turn her out, or in any manner offend her, but he feared her tail would catch fire, for sparks flew about as he laid a tar-dripping pine-root on the fire. So, politely he spoke to the creature:

"Madame, please look after your train; it may catch fire."

The wood-nymph was vastly pleased with the good manners of her host. So,

when she left, she told him who she was, and promised that she and those she ruled over would always be at his service and guard the kiln for him each night, waking him if anything should go wrong. So that's how "Father Lars," Lotta's grandfather, became the most famous charcoal-burner in the whole province.

CHAPTER VIII

MAGIC SPELLS

Saint John's, or Midsummer Day, is the great outdoor festival day in Sweden. It always falls on June twenty-fourth, so everybody is arrayed in fresh, new, light-colored garments, summer is at its best with abundant flowers and rich verdure, and the season is one of frolic and general relaxation before the heavy task of harvesting comes.

For the young people, it is a day of great significance, as on Midsummer Day the Confirmation service takes place. The church is lavishly decorated with flower garlands and greens until it resembles a cool, fragrant bower.

In the Swedish Lutheran church, one is confirmed from the age of fourteen up to sixteen. Fifteen seems to be the popular age. As soon as a girl is confirmed, she

is considered a grown-up young woman, and becomes a *Fröken;* her hair is put up, and her dress is full length. She is even permitted to have young men callers.

I am sorry to state that these advantages meant more to most of us young girls than the purely religious significance of Confirmation.

But on the Sunday following Midsummer Day we were formally admitted as members of the church, and partook of Holy Communion, or The Lord's Supper, for the first time. Our parents, in solemn black, also " went to the Altar " after the Confirmation class had received the sacred bread and wine. After this, the confirmed members in the family always accompanied their parents to the Holy Communion.

Midsummer Eve! A happy warm glow of summer warmth and golden sunshine had transformed all Nature. The towns and the country alike seemed to be throb-

bing and tingling with life-joy. We decorated our houses, inside and out, and hung posies and wreaths and green garlands around the windows. The fireplaces were filled with huge branches of maple, and the corners of the living-rooms banked with green things and sheaves of wild flowers. Over our doorways and gates we erected arches of birch and maple, interlaced with chains of daisies and wild phlox.

But the most fascinating features of this Midsummer celebration were the "magic ceremonies" in which the young people liked to take part. These ceremonies usually took place after sundown on the night of June twenty-third. Pagan spells were woven. Fairies and all the unseen forces in Nature were about and eager to help those who had faith in their power to aid mortals in attaining their wishes.

Usually one chose a faithful chum to take part in those magic functions which had previously been decided on as being

most potent. Because every normal Swedish girl, as soon as she put up her hair and lengthened her frock, begins to dream of a home of her own, of a husband and babies (a spinster is almost a disgrace in this country), most of the Midsummer Night spells were supposed to enable one to look into the future and see one's mate.

Blenda, my adored pal and leader, and I went through some of those mysterious rites during my last Midsummer Night spent in Sweden. I was fifteen at the time and had been confirmed the previous year, so I felt myself to be a full-fledged *Fröken.*

We had decided on a "silence-round" as being the most interesting, dangerous, and romantic. I had taken Mother into my confidence, for the family had to be warned not to speak to me after the sun was no longer visible that evening. But my sister Constance impishly tried every trick she could think of to make me break silence. At last, with Mother's sym-

pathetic coöperation, I managed to get away from the house without having uttered a word.

I met Blenda at the appointed place, a little way out of town. Each one carried with her an empty water tumbler carefully wrapped in paper. Our first task was to climb nine rail-fences and to pick a different herb or flower near each fence. These growing things were to be woven into a magic wreath to be put under our pillows—to dream on, and our respective future husbands would appear before us in a vision. We were also to walk sunwise nine times around a vacant building, while reciting a magic formula. For an empty building, we chose the tiny Gospel Chapel used by the Baptists. So far all had gone well; we wove our spell around this humble place of worship.

Next we had to find a well or a spring where our water tumblers could be filled. The Baptist pump was pressed into service. Dire misfortune would befall us if

one single drop of water were spilled on the ground before we reached the crossroad where we were to sit and wait for *things to happen.* A crossroad a little way farther out in the country had previously been selected. After we had carefully filled our tumblers at the Baptist pump, we made high collars from the paper in which our tumblers were wrapped and, with these collars fortifying the rims to prevent splashing, we set off for the crossroad. Of course we did not speak to each other, but how we did giggle as we tried to convey ideas to one another! We met a few youthful couples seemingly bent on some "magic" errand of their own, because they pretended not to see us, and for this we were grateful.

Finally we arrived at the crossroad, where we sat down with our precious water. If our hearts beat twice as fast as is normal, it must be known that this most potent "magic" would, on the stroke of midnight, cause our future husbands to

appear before us, drain our tumblers, and rush off. It was our task to follow, and try to get a good look at the man who appeared—so that we would be sure to refuse all other suitors.

At last, on the balmy air we heard the distant town-clock boom out twelve midnight strokes. Scarcely had the last note stopped vibrating when, from down the hillside in front of us two white-robed, masked shapes came tearing, as if chased by mad bulls. They fairly flew towards us, and their footfalls hardly seemed like those of flesh-and-blood beings. I was shivering with fear, and my scalp tingled.

Automatically Blenda and I sprang to our feet. Each one of the uncanny creatures grabbed a tumbler and seemed to dispose of the contents in great gulps. The face masks, decorated in the weirdest manner and fringed at the lower edges, were only slightly raised when the water was disposed of.

They turned about swiftly and then ran

with incredible speed down the road towards town, Blenda and I following. But apparently in a few moments they realized that they would soon be overtaken, and so stopped and faced us.

Blenda, brave Blenda, reached out and snatched away the masks. And since this is to be in all respects a true account, I am forced to state that those two white-draped figures were only two of our girl friends; Constance had mischievously told Hilma and Edla that we were to try some magic " stunts." We all laughed. Then Edla gave us a note from Fru Nyholm, Blenda's mother, inviting us to come to the Nyholm home to spend the night and try some more " magic."

Still in silence but with happy chuckles we returned to town. Fru Nyholm received us and invited us out to the kitchen where she conveyed by signs and nods the idea that we were to make " dream-pancakes." Blenda and I also had our bunches of growing things to dispose of

first of all, so we went to my chum's room and hurriedly made our wreaths in the dark, laying them carefully under our pillows. Then we returned to the kitchen.

"Dream-pancakes" are said to contain wonderful potencies. The recipe is: Three tablespoonfuls of flour, three tablespoonfuls of salt, and water enough to make a batter that will spread on the griddle. All who are to eat these cakes must hold the spoon when the ingredients are measured; they must all help to stir the batter, grease the griddle, pour the batter, and turn the pancakes. But above all, not a word must be uttered during the whole performance. Each participant must eat three of these very salty little cakes and go to sleep without taking a drink of water. Then in the dream the future mate will come with a glassful of water. Eagerly we carried out the program. Then, just as we were about to slip between the sheets, into the room came Fru Nyholm carrying a tray on which stood four tumblers half full of

water, and a blue bowl with four eggs. She made signs to us to break the eggs, drop the whites into the water and the yolks into the blue bowl. This we did. Surely we had done enough "magic stunts" to feel that our fortunes, or rather our futures, would be revealed during this Midsummer season.

Fru Nyholm made some queer signs above each one of the water tumblers as she placed it by our bedsides. Then she kissed us all good-night and left us.

Next morning at the breakfast table our hostess interpreted for each one of us the meaning of the strangely pretty figures formed by the whites of each egg dropped in the water. Edla was to marry a doctor and travel for pleasure now and then; we all saw the delicate surgical instruments, also a railroad train at the very bottom of the tumbler. Poor Hilma would become an old maid—from choice, Fru Nyholm added. Blenda would marry a jeweler and silversmith; we all saw

strings of pearls and fanciful shapes of delicate design and fine tools such as jewelers work with. For me there would be a long voyage and an early marriage to a bookish man. Plainly I could see the man in my own tumbler, and naturally, that was the important thing.

But alas for my carefully gathered posies of nine kinds on which I slept during the night! They caused me to shed many tears when, after breakfast, I helped Blenda make our bed. For an evil chance had caused me to put among my collection a stalk of a plant which was literally covered with the squashiest kind of green and full-grown caterpillars. Blenda laughed until her mother thought she would become hysterical, and I wept from vexation and shame, for the pillow-case and undersheet were fearsome to see, what with that sickly green smear of crushed insects.

Out in the country, Midsummer is celebrated with the raising of the May-pole

—although May-day is past. The most popular and pretty girl in the village was always crowned "Midsummer bride." The May-pole was usually erected by the most prominent farmer, who also gave an all-night dance accompanied with abundant food and strong drink. The music consisted of accordion, flute, and violin. This night in the country was wholly given over to the frolic of the young people, many engagements were the result. Also not a few bloody encounters between rivals, "scraps," which occurred as a rule between sailors and the country lads. The latter rightfully resented having these smart sailors carry off their girls merely to amuse themselves with for a little while, for they seldom married the country girls, and of course the sailors were quick to draw their knives in defense of their temporary sweethearts.

CHAPTER IX

THE "FREE WEEK." PEASANT CUSTOMS

THE last week in October is called the "Free Week," for then the harvest is safely stored and the urgent outdoor work disposed of on the farms. This one week of the year is eagerly anticipated, especially by the country servants; it is their only week of liberty during the year. The farmer hires his help for the coming year during this week.

The county fairs and agricultural exhibitions also take place at this time. A general air of festivity causes one to forget that winter is fast approaching. At the county fair, or *marknad,* the enterprising merchants put up stalls and display their wares, and a great deal of bargaining is done.

The goldsmith is doing a brisk busi-

ness in engagement rings. To be engaged properly in Sweden, lovers must exchange rings—plain gold bands, which are later used as wedding rings. But if the sweethearts are too poor to give each other the customary gold ring, the young man may give the girl a silver spoon or a pretty brooch, while the girl may knit a pair of woolen socks for her "*Fästeman.*" If a pair of lovers is aided by some friendly "*Böneman,*" or "go-between," this person is presented with a pair of stockings knitted by the happy prospective bride.

At the county fair, the candy booths are well patronized by young men. There are gorgeously wrapped large squares and sticks of pure sugar candy decorated with pretty miniature pictures and clever little love jingles—similar to American valentines. These sweet and showy tokens are offered to the young woman by the man in whose eyes she may have found favor. Of course, the girl may refuse to accept the

offering, that is, if her fancy is no longer free. Many love affairs began in this simple manner.

Of special interest to us children at the country fair were the stalls where toys could be bought. Here were sold tiny figurines of china, dainty and prettily decorated. Here, for three *öre,* one could buy a cunning clay-cuckoo which produced quite pretty musical sounds if one understood how to regulate the two little openings on the breast of the bird and blow at the tail-slit. There were mouth-organs and drums and other musical instruments, such as the accordion, the favorite instrument of farm-hands.

Cunning wooden toys, dolls and animals gaily painted, were offered for sale. Also funny clowns that would perform the most astonishing acrobatic feats if one pulled a string. There might even be a *Kasper show*—a Swedish version of Punch and Judy. Then, there was the blind singer of ballads, and his repertoire

BERGKVARA.
A hoary ancient ruin in Småland, said to be haunted by fearful specters.

TWO YOUNG FRIENDS.
With only one stick of candy between them.

of *"Visor trykta i år"*—ballads printed during the current year which were eagerly bought by the country lads and later memorized.

One rather interesting feast-day came on November tenth and was known as Martin's Goose Day, celebrated in honor of Martin Luther. A goose was killed in each household which could afford to have a feast and entertain guests. In a manner, this feast-day corresponded to the American Thanksgiving Day, for the thoughtful farmer no doubt felt grateful to God for the harvest, and celebrated by eating the apple-and-prune-stuffed roasted goose and other good things served on this day.

This time of the year the Swedish peasants usually devoted their evenings to "brushing up" their Catechism and Bible History knowledge. For soon the *Kyrkoherde,* or parish priest, would appear in each village and conduct quizzes regard-

ing the religious knowledge of his flock. A strict record of each parishioner was kept. Those who fell below a certain standard would not be permitted to partake of the Lord's Supper during the following year, and such a person was regarded as an outcast until his lack of religious knowledge had been remedied.

In later years, this quizzing system was abandoned, although it was an excellent practice which helped the priest to keep in closer touch with his people. Then there were the social elements also: rich and poor alike looked forward to these household examinations, because it was usually the most prominent farmer in each village who opened his house for the occasion. And, after the ordeal was over, all who attended were treated to a sumptuous feast, with the *Kyrkoherde* leading the way.

Before everybody sat down to do full justice to the meal itself, the *smörgås-bord* greeted the eyes of the hungry ones. This

institution is a kind of unwieldy, multiple *hors-d'œuvre,* or appetizer. The *smörgås-bord* always precedes any formal meal. The men and women helped themselves to the various spiced and thinly sliced smoked home-made sausages, cold tongue, pickled herring, jellied eel, smoked salmon and anchovy, tiny, delicious meat balls, rich cheese, breads of many kinds, butter and preserves, etc. A well-planned and prettily arranged *smörgås-bord* resembles a colorful exhibition of delicatessen stuff at a food show.

Hospitality is one of the sacred laws of Sweden. Even the most casual caller must have his cup of coffee or goblet of fruit juice and little sweet cakes. To refuse to eat or drink what is offered would mark one as ill-bred. Still, to seem too eager to accept refreshments is also a sign of bad manners. It is always considered polite to refuse at least twice before one helps one's self to the food offered. These things were impressed on us children by

our mother. To disobey would have been unthinkable.

One day I suffered greatly because I dared not do what I wanted to do. Mother had taken me with her calling at Captain Hultmann's house, the captain having just returned from abroad. After the coffee, some wonderful preserved tropical fruit was offered. Marvelous, crystallized confections they were, and merely to look at them caused one's mouth to water. I had already eaten a piece when our hostess once more offered us the dish of sweets. I felt Mother's eyes on me. Politely I said, "No, thank you, Fru Hultmann." But, oh! What a stabbing, burning desire for those luscious rose-tinted squares of marmalade nearest me on the dish! I felt as if I were about to suffocate, and tears blurred my sight, but the look of approval Mother gave me was worth the sacrifice.

On our way home, Mother drew my hand into her great, warm muff and gave

it a little friendly pressure. "Anna-Mia, to-night you may look at the pictures in the Doré Bible," she told me. What an unheard-of thing! And in the middle of the week, too, for that great book was only taken from the *Förmak* table on Sundays and holidays while Mother herself carefully turned the leaves and told us about the pictures. I now felt well rewarded for my little act of self-control.

CHAPTER X

FATHER AND I VISIT RELATIVES IN STOCKHOLM

My father had only one sister, married to a newspaper man and living in Stockholm. They had but one child, my cousin Ebba.

At the time of my Confirmation, Ebba had come down to Oscarshamn to visit us. She was a year and five months older than I. Mother was very kind to her, and my sisters simply adored our pretty cousin with her fashionable frocks and hats. Ebba's visit made me very happy, and when we parted, Father promised to bring me up to the Capital of Sweden towards the end of the summer.

Ah, those two weeks in Stockholm! I could write a book about the things I saw. It was the most thrilling sight to see the Royal Guards on splendid horses and

in bright blue-and-gold uniforms dash through the streets to the tunes of martial music. And then the regiments of the *Svea-Guards* who were marching up Lions Hill to the central court of the Royal Castle, where, at the stroke of twelve each noon, they relieved those soldiers who had guarded the castle and their king for the past twenty-four hours.

It may be that His Majesty, the well-beloved King Oscar, would step out on one of the balconies and graciously smile down on his soldiers and his civilian subjects who thronged the castle slope and the inner court. He was a tall, slim, truly nobly fashioned man, half a head taller than most of his subjects, and in his time the most learned monarch in Europe. Master of more than a dozen languages including Sanskrit and the Pali, that summer when an Orientalist Congress was held in Stockholm and a number of stately, turbaned, white-robed Hindoo

princes were the guests of the king, he was able to converse with them in their native languages.

But the National Museum I think proved most interesting to me, for here were to be viewed the art treasures of Sweden; priceless paintings, many dealing with historical subjects. Here I saw the likeness of Karin Månsdotter, the beautiful and unhappy queen of Eric XIV, who in the year 1568 made her his queen. Karin was of very humble birth—her father was merely a corporal of the king's life-guard—but her sweetness and charm of person had won the heart of the king, and he had at once ordered her to become one of the attendants on his sister, the Princess Elizabeth. Soon after this marriage, the king was forced to abdicate, and his younger brother, Prince Johan, became king. But Johan, after having treated his brother Eric most cruelly during several years of imprisonment, finally had him killed by poison. Queen Karin

THE NORDIC MUSEUM.
The pride of Stockholm and of every patriotic Swede interested in the glorious past of his country.

fled to Finland with her two children, Sigrid and Gustaf. Here she lived for some years with her sad memories.

As I looked at the two life-size paintings of those royal lovers, tears filled my eyes, for Mother had read to us so often from the romance of Karin Månsdotter, written by Wilhelmina Stålberg.

Father now led me to a painting that quickly made me smile: Malmström's "The Dance of the Elves." Here were beauty and airy grace, elfin forms draped in gossamer garments flitting over a midsummer landscape, softly illuminated by the twilight of the sun merely dipping below the horizon for a brief hour.

Then I was taken to the marble statue of Endymion, asleep. No wonder Diana felt tempted to kiss that fair face of the sleeping shepherd boy. This statue had been found in fragments at the excavation of Pompeii, bought by beauty-loving Gustáf III, and the precious fragments carefully cemented together. So now En-

dymion sleeps in far-away Sweden instead of in a ruined Italian city.

We also visited the Royal Library, which was set in the midst of a beautiful park, *Humlegården.* Father was a book lover, and he found much to occupy his mind in this delightful building. But Ebba, being impatient to show me more sights, took me out into the park and led me to the statue of Sweden's famous botanist, Carl von Linné, [" Linnæus "] who was born in my own province, Småland.

As any present-day school-child knows, Linné was the scientist who classified the earth's *flora* and *fauna. The Linnean Binominal Nomenclature* was part of his gift to the world. He was the son of very poor parents, but he had courage and a great hunger for learning. During his student years at the University, he was so poor that, instead of socks, he had to wrap his feet in paper to keep them warm in the severe winter weather of Sweden. He tutored during most of his spare time,

studying at night. To-day his name ranks as one of the highest among the scientists of the world.

The Swedish people here in America, wishing to honor the memory of their famous countryman, set about erecting a great statue of Carl von Linné in Lincoln Park, Chicago. One of the most charming native flowers of Sweden, the *Linnéa borealis,* is named in honor of the noted botanist. This plant is a fairy-like creeper with the tiniest, bell-shaped, pink flowers of a most delightful fragrance, and growing in the pine woods.

Stockholm is a city of nearly half a million inhabitants, and it was founded by one of Sweden's most far-sighted rulers of the thirteenth century, Biger Jarl. The city really began as a fortification, to defend the country from the invasion of foreign foes. It is a city built on a number of large and small islands as well as on the mainland. For that reason the capital of Sweden is often called the

Venice of the North, and communications between various points are by means of swift little steamers darting back and forth, although, of course, there are also street-cars and the omnibus services, as well.

As an outdoor pleasure resort this city is ideal for the provincial population flocking to Stockholm during the summer. There are band concerts in the parks with café and open-air restaurant arrangements where excellent food is served at all hours, often by pretty waitresses in colorful peasant costumes.

In the oldest parts of the city, the streets are so narrow that two carriages can scarcely pass each other, while the houses themselves are six stories high, with stone walls seven feet thick. Quaint street names, commemorating great historical events, meet the eyes at every turn. For Stockholm has often, during seven hundred years as a city, been the storm-center of various political factions. Now

and then noble and innocent heads have fallen under the executioner's axe.

Years ago, when Father took me to visit my relatives in Stockholm, that city was said to have the best fire department of any city in Europe. It was wonderful to see the firemen rush like a whirlwind through the streets to reach a fire.

CHAPTER XI

SCHOOL-DAYS

In Sweden the free public schools consist of the Primary School, with two grades; the Folk School, with four grades; and the High School, with from four to six years.

I did not attend the Primary School. When I entered the Folk School, I was at once put into the third grade. My schooling at home had been so well directed that at the age of ten, I knew as much as the thirteen- and fourteen-year-old boys and girls.

The reason why I had not been sent to school any sooner was that my parents wanted to send me to a private school, but this they had been unable to do so far. Looking back on my two years in the Folk School, I can truthfully say that they were happy years. We had compul-

sory religious training—two hours a day, sometimes, were spent on Catechism and Bible History. Our singing lessons were devoted to learning a number of psalms, and each day began with prayer and reading from the Bible. We were expected to be familiar with events described in both the New and the Old Testament and many a long and lofty Biblical passage had to be memorized. So, early in life, I learned to love the simple and stately language of the Bible.

I liked zoology and botany. In our drawing lessons we were given Greek meanders to copy, and those of us who were clever and swift were permitted to do more intricate designs. But we had no talks about art appreciation or the meaning of the Moorish or Romanesque patterns in our drawing-books.

Much of our reading was from Swedish-history text-books, and we were taught to look upon our warrior kings as wonderful heroes, even when they plunged the

country into futile wars with such powerful enemies as Russia.

We were given a mere smattering of chemistry and physics, but were carefully drilled in grammar and spelling, while mathematics and geometry were given due attention. But wonderful were the lessons in gymnastics; our drill hours were always eagerly anticipated. Setting-up exercises took place out-of-doors in the school yard, winter and summer.

Our school closed early in the summer. On the final day, our parents attended the exercises and quizzes conducted by the school superintendent of the district or by some prominent member of the school board. Then the graduates were presented with their certificates, and afterwards we had coffee and *doppa* in the school garden under the trees. We all partook of refreshments, our parents, the board members, and the teachers; the superintendent himself became human and mingled with us youngsters, asking

the graduates what they intended to make of their lives.

The autumn after I graduated from the Folk School, the Hydbom School for Girls, an inexpensive private school, was opened in our city, and I was enrolled with about thirty other girls.

The eldest Fröken Hydbom was our Postmistress. Her three sisters, Anna, Margit, and Thorborg with two elderly Fröknar conducted the classes in literature, languages, music, art, and manners, and, of course, fine needlework and lace-making.

The Hydbom house was a rambling, two-story structure close to the park, one of the oldest houses in the city. The school was conducted on more or less informal lines, but we had to perform each given task as well as we knew how; praise and blame were not spared, partiality never shown. Our instructors wanted us to go forth from their school well equipped to meet life.

Fröken Anna and Fröken Margit, who were twins, had one dominant fear in common—thunder and lightning. A few months before they were born, the Hydbom house had been struck during a severe electrical storm, and the fainting Fru Hydbom had to be carried from the burning house. It was said that the twin sisters, every time a thunder-storm came up, sped to their room and buried themselves under huge feather beds, first closing the shutters and stuffing their ears with cotton.

One day we girls, with the thoughtlessness of youth, took advantage of our gentle teachers' dread of thunder-storms. The launching of a great three-masted ship, built in our splendid ship-building yard, was to take place in a few days; and, of course, such an event was the talk of every one.

As my own grandfather had been a designer and builder of swift and wonderful sailing vessels, I felt entitled to be present at every ship-launching that took place in

our town. When we girls tactfully asked to be excused during the afternoon of the great day, Fröken Anna told us that she frankly disapproved of our going down to the launching where we would hear swearing and much uncouth language, mingle with sailors and stevedores, and drunken people. "Furthermore," Fröken Margit added, "your education is the important thing in your life at present."

From the attitude of our teachers, we knew that only something miraculous would set us free for the launching. How we all racked our brains for a plan that would be both safe and practical! I, more than any one else, wanted to see the ship released, glide from its bed in slow, stately grace, and with a gentle dip slip into the water while the band played and all the spectators shouted and hurrahed and waved hats and handkerchiefs.

We were a gloomy group of girls doing our gymnastics up in the airy, roomy Hydbom attic one afternoon two days be-

fore the ship launching. The attic was a nice, clean place, shady and cool, with a smooth plank floor and a few gymnastic appliances. Suddenly Blenda Nyholm gave me a gentle nudge. An idea had come to her whereby she felt sure things would shape themselves so that we might be allowed to see the launching.

Blenda's plan was quite simple, not at all dangerous, and would harm no one. Only the twin fröknar would be forced to spend part of the afternoon of the great day under their feather beds. On the way home from school, Blenda revealed her plan. Arvid, her brother, would be glad to help us, if we could find a crown in money to give him for his mother's birthday gift; Fru Nyholm's birthday came the day after the launching. Of course, Sigge Nilson, his boy chum, would be glad to help, just to play a little trick on the Hydbom fröknar because they were always so fussy about Sigge's muddy shoes when he brought them groceries.

On the day of the ship launching early in the afternoon, while Fröken Thorborg conducted the music class, Fröken Margit supervised our painting, and Fröken Anna struggled with the French class, there came a soft rumble of thunder. Again and again it came, increasing gradually. We paid no attention, for we were seemingly busy with our lessons. No flashes of lightning, so far. The house stood among tall trees, and only overhead could the sky be seen in summer.

"Is that thunder?" Fröken Anna asked us after the third rumble had ceased. We all saw her turn white, but we said we hoped it would not rain, although it sounded as if a thunder-storm was coming up. We had come to school without our umbrellas, we admitted.

A sudden loud crash caused Blenda to look towards the ceiling. Then followed a low dull rumble. Furtively I watched Fröken Margit who was helping Gerda Öberg with a study of water-lilies. The

teacher rose and went to her room; soon she was followed by her twin sister. In a few minutes Fröken Thorborg also rose and joined the other two. Boldly Blenda began to clean her brushes. I did likewise.

Fröken Thorborg returned and told us that we were excused for the afternoon, as a severe storm undoubtedly would break very soon and she could not allow us to get wet; so would we please hurry home? It was evident that the ship-launching was far from Fröken Thorborg's mind this minute. Never had we rushed out from the Hydbom school with the mad haste of this day. Off to the shipbuilding yard we tore, thirty laughing, thoughtless girls.

Blenda was the genius who had planned our release. I had, as we say here in America, merely "financed the undertaking." Arvid and Sigge had sneaked up to the Hydbom garret when the two boys brought the grocery to the Hydboms. In a covered basket Arvid carried four large

wooden balls belonging to the bowling-alley of the *Idrott Club*. Both boys were barefooted, so their footfalls on the bare attic floor were not heard while they amused themselves by rolling these wooden balls back and forth. The rumble was a very good imitation of distant thunder, as we heard it from the rooms below. But in the midst of Arvid's maneuvering of two of the balls across the planked floor, Sigge had carelessly dropped the other two, causing the fearsome crash at which Blenda had raised her head. But after this mishap, the two thunder-makers produced only the regular rumbles of an approaching storm which resulted in our being let out in time to see the ship-launching.

And it was a sight worth remembering, when the stately three-master with a mighty surge of the water about its virgin keel dipped and, for a thrilling moment, veered first to one side then to the other before it slid safely into deeper water.

How we all held our breath in fear something would go wrong and there would be a delay or even an accident! But there were no reasons to fear disaster, for the blue-and-gold pennant with the ship's name, *Prins Karl,* suddenly waved in the summer breeze, and an ear-splitting "hurrah" broke from five thousand throats, while the Sharpshooters Band struck up a jolly march. On deck stood the Master Builder, the Captain who was to sail the ship, and special guests.

In my pocket, tied in a corner of my handkerchief, was a one-crown silver coin which I had borrowed from Lotta. For Arvid and Sigge were not to be paid unless their "thunder performance" was successfully carried out according to Blenda's carefully pencilled instructions to the two boys. Arvid found us in the crowd, and I slid over to his side and smuggled the precious silver piece into his hand. Off he dashed to spend it for his mother's birthday gift.

CHAPTER XII

STARS AND STRIPES. I TAKE AN IMPORTANT STEP

Beata Nyholm, my chum Blenda's older sister, had returned from America the summer I was confirmed. Beata was married to an American business man and was back in Sweden only for the summer to visit her parents.

A few days after her arrival, Blenda took me into her sister's room to show me some English books the two American visitors had brought with them. Strangely enough, I paid scant attention to the books. Instead, a great flag made of bunting and showing red and white stripes and a marvelous blue field with a number of white stars drew my eyes. It was draped beside our own blue-and-yellow flag between the windows and above the sofa-bed.

"Oh, how beautiful!" I cried. "Blenda, what flag is that?" My hands were clasped, and my eyes were blurred with tears—tears of a queer new emotion. That star-field, those bold red stripes between the white ones, the whole flag—how it stirred me! A strange new unrest suddenly woke in my breast.

Blenda smiled at my entrancement. Then she said:

"Anna-Mia, you are a funny girl. To cry over a flag! To me, our Swedish flag is the more beautiful."

"But what flag is it?" I persisted.

"The flag of the United States of America," my friend finally told me. "Beata feels a little bit like you about it, I am sure; else she wouldn't have bothered lugging it home to show us."

Somehow, I felt hurt at Blenda's words. But I made up my mind to have Fru Beata tell me more about that wonderful flag; they were all coming to our house for dinner the following day.

Of course, I had read translated stories of life in America. I was familiar with James Fenimore Cooper and his delightful Indian romances. My cousin Herrman had introduced me to those books. Then, too, we had all wept over *Uncle Tom* and *Little Eva* and laughed at Topsy and Aunt Ophelia. To us, Lincoln was the bravest and most wonderful man in the world. Still, I had never, to my knowledge, seen an American flag until I came across this one in the Nyholm home.

That evening I astonished my parents by asking them to let me go to America. I felt confident that I could do as well as Fru Beata. She had been only seventeen when she left Sweden in search of larger opportunities, and had become a trained nurse, later marrying a well-to-do American.

Father and Mother insisted that I was too young. True, I was only a few months past fourteen, but I felt altogether

grown up. I was taller than Mother, and could easily pass for eighteen or twenty.

Father was very patriotic, and expressed his contempt for the ambitious young men of military age who had to petition the King so as to be permitted to migrate to America and escape compulsory military training. One of Father's best tannery workers had left his employment and gone to New York a few weeks earlier; so he naturally felt very bitter towards any one wishing to leave Sweden.

Mother, however, felt differently about my desire to leave home, but she advised me to be patient for a few months. Intuitively she knew that a way would open whereby my longing to go away would be satisfied. I told her how I had felt when I saw the American flag, and she smiled sympathetically. The Santesons, my mother's people, had in the grey past been Vikings, so perhaps I carried in my blood the love for freedom and adventure.

But my education was not finished.

A VIKING.
From such sturdy ancestors were my mother's people, the Santesons.

Only two years had I attended the Hydbom school, with but one term of English. Strangely enough, I had chosen English in preference to the more fashionable French, or the popular German—the three languages besides a smattering of Latin which were studied in our little school.

Fru Beata—Mrs. White—helped me with my English that summer—conversational English. Impatiently I wanted to learn to talk first; then later I could always learn to read and write. How I struggled with the *th*, *w*, and *j* which are the chief stumbling-blocks to most Swedish people trying to master English. I would say: "Den Yenny came vid de vouter," instead of "Then Jenny came with the water."

One of Father's objections to my going to America was that he could not spare the passage money just then. His tannery business did not prosper as in former years; his partner was ailing and wanted

to sell out his interest in the tannery. Mother explained those things to me in one of our confidential talks. We had to be more economical. Then Lotta was married, and after she left us, we managed without a servant. Constance and I were trained to help with all the tasks around the house. We had also learned to cook and bake and put up fruit and take care of our own clothes, and I showed a liking for dressmaking and millinery at an early age. Therefore Mother apprenticed me with the leading modiste in our city for one year, where I was to learn designing, dressmaking, and millinery.

As I already knew considerable about plain sewing, and could make buttonholes and do fancy stitching by hand, as well as manage a sewing-machine, it did not take many weeks before Fru Karlström felt justified in paying me some wages. This money was religiously added to my savings in the Postal Savings Bank, and Mother was the only one who knew any-

thing about my thrift. *Öre* by *öre* my little savings grew—a crown from Father now and then; the ten-crowns from Uncle Petter (for being butted by his prize ram), some money I had earned by making laces for Tante Herta, and by the sale of a dozen embroidered fancy guest towels besides a few other embroidered articles that had been disposed of for me through the kindly aid of Herr and Fru Erdman who conducted a fancy-goods shop and sold things on commission—all this wealth I accumulated with the utmost joy, in lieu of my objective.

Mother and I kept the secret that I was being paid while still an apprentice at Fru Karlström's establishment. I did not return to the Hydbom school; instead, Constance was enrolled there. I was perfectly content for the present, since I was earning money. Each week's wages brought my departure for America a little closer. In my memory lived the inspiring talks I had heard from Beata White's lips. She

had frankly told my parents that it would be a shame to keep me in Sweden since my heart was set on making my own way in America. I wanted to study, learn to paint, know all there was to know about art and color harmony; and also I wanted to write about all those things that set my spirit throbbing—of beauty, of heart-aches and longing for I do not know what. Growing-pains perhaps they were, all those sensations that urged me to seek a broader, freer world in which to grow and work out my destiny.

Hulda, one of our former maids, had migrated to America four years ago; she was already married and had two babies. Hulda's mother came now and then to the city to spend a day with Mother who was very fond of *Mor* Lena, and who took a keen interest in all the affairs of the Johansons. All the letters from Hulda had to be read and commented on. The three older boys, too, had done well after they had been in America a few years,

and now their old mother could live in comfort for the rest of her days since the boys sent her little sums of money ever so often.

It was after one of *Mor* Lena's visits that I decided to write to Hulda and ask her if she would let me come to her house for a few days if I should come to America; I told her how I had fairly lost my heart to the American flag. When I showed Mother this letter, she smiled at some of the things I had written, but I was allowed to send it.

In due time Hulda's reply came. I would be welcome to the Ericsons and I could remain as long as I wanted. Hulda was enthusiastic about my coming, and felt sure I would be able to do as well as any other strong and healthy young girl willing to work. Mother was very happy about this letter, and we talked things over at great length after which she began to get my under-garments and other things ready for my departure.

At last my year at Fru Karlström's was over. It had been a profitable one; I felt I could earn my living with my hands, and, best of all, make my own dresses, wraps, and hats. Then I went to have an interview with Father, to ask his permission to migrate. I confess that my knees wanted to fold up like jack-knives; my heart thumped most painfully, my tongue felt dead, and my throat was dry. But somehow, I managed to put my plea before him.

"Anna-Mia, what nonsense is this?" Father frowned, and his voice sounded very harsh. "At present I couldn't even afford to send you up to Stockholm to visit your cousin." Suddenly he smiled in a sad manner, and now his voice was softer. "Viking blood, of course. If only you had been a boy! Then we could have put you in the Navy and you would have had a chance to see the world." It had always been Father's secret grief that all his living children were girls.

Father's softer mood gave me courage to go on. "Suppose, *Lilla Far,* that I did not ask you for any money to take me to America; would you let me go then? Fru Akeson and her two children are leaving for Minnesota in September. I could go with them."

"But she would not pay your fare, nor look after you in America, would she?" His voice now sounded merely tired.

"I never asked her to pay my fare, nor look after me after we get there." I had a close grip on my Postal Bank book as I continued: "Father, please tell me, *would* you let me go if I did not ask you for a single *öre?*"

"Perhaps." Now he laughed. "I suppose you would pester me until I said you could go." He looked at me keenly with a little twinkle of fun in his eyes. "Intend to *walk* across the ocean?"

"No, of course not." With a sweeping curtsy, I held out my bank-book to him. "Look, Father! All mine! Over

two hundred crowns!" How I trembled inwardly, fearing he would say I couldn't go, after all.

For some minutes he studied those evidences of my thrift—each date of entry and the amount. He looked puzzled. I had been known in my family during this last year as the "miser." Constance often taunted me in front of Father with my failure to buy little gifts for her and my small sisters when their birthdays came. Instead, I had *made* such gifts in my spare time. Now I told my father that Fru Karlström had paid me while I was an apprentice, and that Mother had put my earnings into the Postal Bank.

Still, here he stood, gazing out of the store window for many long silent minutes, while I felt like one awaiting a death-sentence. His brows were drawn together; he was deliberating with himself. It did not enter my mind that in less than six years I would be twenty-one—of age; then I could do as I pleased, leave my

home without his permission; but absolute obedience had been the keynote of my upbringing.

Finally Father said, "Anna-Mia, you know how I feel about America, but since you already suffer from the emigration fever, go, in God's name."

"Thank you, Father." I kissed his hand as he held out the bank-book to me. My heart was filled with a bursting joy. "Herr Cedergren will make out all the papers. Pastor Dahlberg will need your written consent before he gives me my *prest-betyg;* so please, Father, write that out for me."

A few minutes later I was on my way to the pastor's house with the precious slip of paper signifying Father's willingness to let me migrate to America.

Two weeks later, I stood on the deck of *Romeo,* the steamer that was to carry us to England whence we were to embark on the ocean liner. Not one sad thought had marred my happiness about going

away. Mother and I talked about the future, when I would return for a visit—after I had made my fortune, or gained a name for myself. Constance was openly pleased, for now she would be the eldest daughter at home. My two little sisters were content; had they not inherited my picture-books and my many sketches?

I think I was the happiest person who had ever seen the grey rocks of the Bohuslän skerries recede from sight. America, Freedom, and Adventure called me.

THE END

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